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The following weird sketch by Nathaniel Hawthorne is taken from the *International Magazine*, dated February 1, 1852, in which it appeared as an original contribution. Although it is destitute of plot, it is one of the most picturesque pieces of Hawthorne's writing, and it handles the supernatural as no pen but his has ever done. Is the figure which Mother Rigby created, intended to travesty the politicians of Hawthorne's day?

FEATHERTOP.

A MORALIZED LEGEND.

"DICKON," cried Mother Rigby, "a coal for my pipe!"

The pipe was in the old dame's mouth, when she said these words. She had thrust it there after filling it with tobacco, but without stooping to light it at the hearth; where, indeed, there was no appearance of a fire having been kindled that morning. Forthwith, however, as soon as the order was given, there was an intense red glow out of the bowl of the pipe, and a whiff of smoke from Mother Rigby's lips. Whence the coal came, and how brought thither by an invisible hand, I have never been able to discover.

"Good!" quoth Mother Rigby, with a nod of her head. "Thank ye, Dickon! And now for making this scarecrow. Be within call, Dickon, in case I need you again!"

The good woman had risen thus early (for as yet it was scarcely sunrise), in order to set about making a scarecrow, which she intended to put in the middle of her corn-patch. It was now the latter week of May, and the crows and blackbirds had already discovered the little, green, rolled-up leaf of the Indian corn, just peeping out of the soil. She was determined, therefore, to contrive as lifelike a scarecrow as ever was seen, and to finish it immediately, from top to toe, so that it should begin its sentinel's duty that very morning. Now, Mother Rigby (as everybody must have heard)

was one of the most cunning and potent witches in New England, and might, with very little trouble, have made a scarecrow ugly enough to frighten the minister himself. But, on this occasion, as she had awakened in an uncommonly pleasant humor, and was further dulcified by her pipe of tobacco, she resolved to produce something fine, beautiful, and splendid, rather than hideous and horrible.

"I don't want to set up a hobgoblin in my own corn-patch, and almost at my own door-step," said Mother Rigby to herself, puffing out a whiff of smoke; "I could do it if I pleased; but I'm tired of doing marvellous things, and so I'll keep within the bounds of every-day business, just for variety's sake. Besides, there is no use in scaring the little children for a mile round about, though 'tis true I'm a witch!"

It was settled, therefore, in her own mind, that the scarecrow should represent a fine gentleman of the period, so far as the materials at hand would allow. Perhaps it may be as well to enumerate the chief of the articles that went to the composition of this figure.

The most important item of all, probably, athough it made so little show, was a certain broomstick, on which Mother Rigby had taken many an airy gallop at midnight, and which now served the scarecrow by way of a spinal column, or, as the unlearned phrase it, a backbone. One of its arms was a disabled flail which used to be wielded by Goodman Rigby, before his spouse worried him out of this troublesome world; the other, if I mistake not, was composed of the pudding-stick and a broken rung of a chair, tied loosely together at the elbow. As for its legs, the right was a hoe-handle, and the left an undistinguished and miscellaneous stick from the wood-pile. Its lungs, stomach, and other affairs of that kind, were nothing better than a meal-bag, stuffed with straw. Thus, we have made out the skeleton and entire corporeity of the scarecrow, with the exception of its head; and this was admirably supplied by a somewhat withered and shrivelled pumpkin, in which Mother Rigby cut two holes for the eyes

and a slit for the mouth, leaving a bluish-colored knob in the middle, to pass for a nose. It was really quite a respectable face.

"I've seen worse ones on human shoulders, at any rate," said Mother Rigby. "And many a fine gentleman has a pumpkin-head, as well as my scarecrow!"

But the clothes, in this case, were to be the making of the man. So the good old woman took down from a peg an ancient plum-colored coat, of London make, and with relics of embroidery on its seams, cuffs, pocket-flaps, and button-holes, but lamentably worn and faded, patched at the elbows, tattered at the skirts, and threadbare all over. On the left breast was a round hole, whence either a star of nobility had been rent away, or else the hot heart of some former wearer had scorched it through and through. The neighbors said that this rich garment belonged to the Black Man's wardrobe, and that he kept it at Mother Rigby's cottage for the convenience of slipping it on whenever he wished to make a grand appearance at the governor's table. To match the coat, there was a velvet waistcoat of very ample size, and formerly embroidered with foliage, that had been as brightly golden as the maple leaves in October, but which had now quite vanished out of the substance of the velvet. Next came a pair of scarlet breeches, once worn by the French governor of Louisbourg, and the knees of which had touched the lower step of the throne of Louis le Grand. The Frenchman had given these small-clothes to an Indian pow-wow, who parted with them to the old witch for a gill of strong waters, at one of their dances in the forest. Furthermore, Mother Rigby produced a pair of silk stockings, and put them on the figure's legs, where they showed as unsubstantial as a dream, with the wooden reality of the two sticks making itself miserably apparent through the holes. Lastly, she put her dead husband's wig on the bare scalp of the pumpkin, and surmounted the whole with a dusty three-cornered hat, in which was stuck the longest tail-feather of a rooster.

Then the old dame stood the figure up in a corner of

her cottage, and chuckled to behold its yellow semblance of a visage, with its nobby little nose thrust into the air. It had a strangely self-satisfied aspect, and seemed to say, "Come look at me!"

"And you are well worth looking at—that's a fact!" quoth Mother Rigby, in admiration at her own handiwork. "I've made many a puppet, since I've been a witch; but methinks this is the finest of them all. 'Tis almost too good for a scarecrow. And, by the by, I'll just fill a fresh pipe of tobacco, and then take him out to the corn-patch."

While filling her pipe, the old woman continued to gaze with almost motherly affection at the figure in the corner. To say the truth, whether it was chance, or skill, or downright witchcraft, there was something wonderfully human in this ridiculous shape, bedizened with its tattered finery; and as for the countenance, it appeared to shrivel its yellow surface into a grin—a funny kind of expression, betwixt scorn and merriment, as if it understood itself to be a jest at mankind. The more Mother Rigby looked, the better she was pleased.

"Dickon," cried she sharply, "another coal for my pipe!"

Hardly had she spoken than, just as before, there was a red-glowing coal on the top of the tobacco. She drew in a long whiff, and puffed it forth again into the bar of morning sunshine, which struggled through the one dusty pane of her cottage window. Mother Rigby always liked to flavor her pipe with a coal of fire from the particular chimney-corner whence this had been brought. But where that chimney-corner might be, or who brought the coal from it—further than that the invisible messenger seemed to respond to the name of Dickon—I cannot tell.

"That puppet, yonder," thought Mother Rigby, still with her eyes fixed on the scarecrow, "is too good a piece of work to stand all summer in a corn-patch, frightening away the crows and blackbirds. He's capable of better things. Why, I've danced with a worse one, when partners happened to be scarce, at our witch-

meetings in the forest! What if I should let him take his chance among the other men of straw and empty fellows, who go bustling about the world?"

The old witch took three or four more whiffs of her pipe, and smiled.

"He'll meet plenty of his brethren at every street-corner!" continued she. "Well; I didn't mean to dabble in witchcraft to-day, further than the lighting of my pipe; but a witch I am, and a witch I'm likely to be, and there's no use trying to shirk it. I'll make a man of my scarecrow, were it only for the joke's sake!"

While muttering these words, Mother Rigby took the pipe from her own mouth, and thrust it into the crevice which represented the same feature in the pumpkin-visage of the scarecrow.

"Puff, darling, puff!" said she. "Puff away, my fine fellow! your life depends on it!"

This was a strange exhortation, undoubtedly, to be addressed to a mere thing of sticks, straw, and old clothes, with nothing better than a shrivelled pumpkin for a head; as we know to have been the scarecrow's case. Nevertheless, as we must carefully hold in remembrance, Mother Rigby was a witch of singular power and dexterity; and, keeping this fact duly before our minds, we shall see nothing beyond credibility in the remarkable incidents of our story. Indeed, the great difficulty will be at once got over, if we can only bring ourselves to believe that, as soon as the old dame bade him puff, there came a whiff of smoke from the scarecrow's mouth. It was the very feeblest of whiffs, to be sure; but it was followed by another and another, each more decided than the preceding one.

"Puff away, my pet! puff away, my pretty one!" Mother Rigby kept repeating, with her pleasantest smile. "It is the breath of life to ye; and that you may take my word for!"

Beyond all question the pipe was bewitched. There must have been a spell either in the tobacco or in the fiercely-glowing coal that so mysteriously burned on top of it, or in the pungently aromatic smoke which

exhaled from the kindled weed. The figure, after a few doubtful attempts, at length blew forth a volley of smoke, extending all the way from the obscure corner into the bar of sunshine. There it eddied and melted away among the motes of dust. It seemed a convulsive effort; for the two or three next whiffs were fainter, although the coal still glowed, and threw a gleam over the scarecrow's visage. The old witch clapt her skinny hands together, and smiled encouragingly upon her handiwork. She saw that the charm worked well. The shrivelled, yellow face, which heretofore had been no face at all, had already a thin, fantastic haze, as it were, of human likeness, shifting to and fro across it; sometimes vanishing entirely, but growing more perceptible than ever with the next whiff from the pipe. The whole figure, in like manner, assumed a show of life, such as we impart to ill-defined shapes among the clouds, and half-deceive ourselves with the pastime of our own fancy.

If we must needs pry closely into the matter, it may be doubted whether there was any real change, after all, in the sordid, worn-out, worthless, and ill-jointed substance of the scarecrow; but merely a spectral illusion, and a cunning effect of light and shade, so colored and contrived as to delude the eyes of most men. The miracles of witchcraft seem always to have had a very shallow subtlety; and, at least, if the above explanation do not hit the truth of the process, I can suggest no better.

"Well puffed, my pretty lad!" still cried old Mother Rigby. "Come, another good, stout whiff, and let it be with might and main! Puff for thy life, I tell thee! Puff out of the very bottom of thy heart; if any heart thou hast, or any bottom to it! Well done, again! Thou didst suck in that mouthful as if for the pure love of it."

And then the witch beckoned to the scarecrow, throwing so much magnetic potency into her gesture, that it seemed as if it must inevitably be obeyed, like the mystic call of the loadstone, when it summons the iron.

"Why lurkest thou in the corner, lazy one?" said she. "Step forth! Thou hast the world before thee."

Upon my word, if the legend were not one which I heard on my grandmother's knee, and which had established its place among things credible before my childish judgment could analyze its probability, I question whether I should have the face to tell it now!

In obedience to Mother Rigby's word, and extending its arm as if to reach her outstretched hand, the figure made a step forward—a kind of hitch and jerk, however, rather than a step—then tottered, and almost lost its balance. What could the witch expect? It was nothing, after all, but a scarecrow, stuck upon two sticks. But the strong-willed old beldame scowled, and beckoned, and flung the energy of her purpose so forcibly at this poor combination of rotten wood, and musty straw, and ragged garments, that it was compelled to show itself a man, despite of the reality of things. So it stepped into the bar of sunshine. There it stood —poor devil of a contrivance that it was!—with only the thinnest vesture of human similitude about it, through which was evident the stiff, rickety, incongruous, faded, tattered, good-for-nothing patchwork of its substance, ready to sink in a heap upon the floor, as conscious of its own unworthiness to be erect. Shall I confess the truth? At its present point of vivification, the scarecrow reminds me of some of the lukewarm and abortive characters, composed of heterogeneous materials, used for the thousandth time, and never worth using, with which romance-writers (and myself, no doubt, among the rest) have so over-peopled the world of fiction.

But the fierce old hag began to get angry, and show a glimpse of her diabolic nature (like a snake's head, peeping with a hiss out of her bosom), at this pusillanimous behavior of the thing, which she had taken the trouble to put together.

"Puff away, wretch!" cried she wrathfully. "Puff, puff, puff, thou thing of straw and emptiness!—thou rag or two!—thou meal-bag!—thou pumpkin-head!—

thou nothing!—where shall I find a name vile enough to call thee by? Puff, I say, and suck in thy fantastic life along with the smoke; else I snatch the pipe from thy mouth, and hurl thee where that red coal came from!"

Thus threatened, the unhappy scarecrow had nothing for it but to puff away for dear life. As need was, therefore, it applied itself lustily to the pipe, and sent forth such abundant volleys of tobacco-smoke, that the small cottage-kitchen became all vaporous. The one sunbeam struggled mistily through, and could but imperfectly define the image of the cracked and dusty window-pane on the opposite wall. Mother Rigby, meanwhile, with one brown arm akimbo, and the other stretched toward the figure, loomed grimly amid the obscurity, with such port and expression as when she was wont to heave a ponderous nightmare on her victims, and stand at the bedside to enjoy their agony. In fear and trembling did this poor scarecrow puff. But its efforts, it must be acknowledged, served an excellent purpose; for, with each successive whiff, the figure lost more and more of its dizzy and perplexing tenuity, and seemed to take denser substance. Its very garments, moreover, partook of the magical change, and shone with the gloss of novelty, and glistened with the skilfully-embroidered gold that had long ago been rent away. And, half-revealed among the smoke, a yellow visage bent its lustreless eyes on Mother Rigby.

At last, the old witch clenched her fist, and shook it at the figure. Not that she was positively angry, but merely acting on the principle—perhaps untrue, or not the only truth, though as high a one as Mother Rigby could be expected to attain—that feeble and torpid natures, being incapable of better inspiration, must be stirred up by fear. But here was the crisis. Should she fail in what she now sought to effect, it was her ruthless purpose to scatter the miserable simulacre into its original elements.

"Thou hast a man's aspect," said she sternly. "Have also the echo and mockery of a voice! I bid thee speak!"

The scarecrow gasped, struggled, and at length emitted a murmur, which was so incorporated with its smoky breath that you could scarcely tell whether it were indeed a voice, or only a whiff of tobacco. Some narrators of this legend hold the opinion, that Mother Rigby's conjurations, and the fierceness of her will, had compelled a familiar spirit into the figure, and that the voice was his.

"Mother," mumbled the poor stifled voice, "be not so awful with me! I would fain speak; but being without wits, what can I say?"

"Thou canst speak, darling, canst thou?" cried Mother Rigby, relaxing her grim countenance into a smile. "And what shalt thou say, quoth-a! Say, indeed! Art thou of the brotherhood of the empty skull, and demandest of me what thou shalt say? Thou shalt say a thousand things, and saying them a thousand times over, thou shalt still have said nothing! Be not afraid, I tell thee! When thou comest into the world (whither I purpose sending thee, forthwith), thou shalt not lack the wherewithal to talk. Talk! Why, thou shalt babble like a mill-stream, if thou wilt. Thou hast brains enough for that, I trow!"

"At your service, mother," responded the figure.

"And that was well said, my pretty one!" answered Mother Rigby. "Then thou spakest like thyself, and meant nothing. Thou shalt have a hundred such set phrases, and five hundred to the boot of them. And now, darling, I have taken so much pains with thee, and thou art so beautiful, that, by my troth, I love thee better than any witch's puppet in the world; and I've made them of all sorts—clay, wax, straw, sticks, night-fog, morning-mist, sea-foam, and chimney-smoke! But thou art the very best. So give heed to what I say!"

"Yes, kind mother," said the figure, "with all my heart!"

"With all thy heart!" cried the old witch, setting her hands to her sides, and laughing loudly. "Thou hast such a pretty way of speaking! With all thy

heart! And thou didst put thy hand to the left side of thy waistcoat, as if thou really hadst one!"

So now, in high good humor with this fantastic contrivance of hers, Mother Rigby told the scarecrow that it must go and play its part in the great world, where not one man in a hundred, she affirmed, was gifted with more real substance than itself. And, that he might hold up his head with the best of them, she endowed him, on the spot, with an unreckonable amount of wealth. It consisted partly of a gold mine in Eldorado, and of ten thousand shares in a broken bubble, and of half-a-million acres of vineyard at the North Pole, and of a castle in the air and a chateau in Spain, together with all the rents and income therefrom accruing. She further made over to him the cargo of a certain ship, laden with salt of Cadiz, which she herself, by her necromantic arts, had caused to founder, ten years before, in the deepest part of mid-ocean. If the salt were not dissolved, and could be brought to market, it would fetch a pretty penny among the fishermen. That he might not lack ready money, she gave him a copper farthing, of Birmingham manufacture, being all the coin she had about her, and likewise a great deal of brass, which she applied to his forehead, thus making it yellower than ever.

"Sonny" is one of Miss Mary E. Wilkins's most characteristic sketches. It is taken from *Lippincott's Magazine*. The deserved fame which has come to this youngest and most successful among American story-writers, is the legitimate result of her conscientious fidelity to life as she knows it. But while Miss Wilkins is a realist, she is no less an idealist, and the delicate humor which pervades all of her writings provides the nice balance-wheel which preserves the equilibrium of the whole as the homely characters do their little parts before our eyes, each one bathed in the light of that enchanting country which only the poet knows. It is a pity that every one who feels that he must soon die and leave little children to the care of others, is not as clever as was "Grandpa," in devising methods to prove the fitness of the future guardians of their welfare.

SONNY.

THE road was wider by the school-house and old Daniel Price's and George Price's. It made a broad loop to the west, then it bent along again to the south.

The small school-house stood on one side of the loop; old Daniel Price's and George's on the other. Old Daniel's, directly opposite the school-house, was a tiny, bright-colored building. There were only two rooms and a loft in it. The clapboards were painted red, and the little window and door-casings white. It was close to the road, and seemed to start up suddenly and artlessly, like a red wayside flower.

Old Daniel sat in an arm-chair in his front door, and looked over at the school-house. The windows were open, and the shrill babble of children's voices floated out. Now they spelled in unison; now they multiplied; now a thin, sweet little voice piped up alone, and an older one was heard between-whiles, in reproof or direction.

The old man listened admiringly. "That's Sonny spellin'," he said to himself, when a certain child-voice rang out by itself. And he leaned forward and fixed

his sharp black eyes more intently on the open windows. He was old—over eighty—but his deep-set eyes were very bright still, and sharp.

It was an afternoon in the latter part of August. The wind was very cool; the tree-boughs tossed up lightly in it. Every leaf pointed out crisply and had a dark glisten of its own. A patch of ripe corn in a field swayed over, and looked as if it were covered with a thick silver fleece.

The afternoon sun shone full on Daniel's bald head, but its heat was so mild that he did not mind it.

He sat with his arms in their calico shirt-sleeves on the arms of the chair, and watched the school-house. Now and then a pair of young, wistful eyes peered over a window-sill. Some tiny wild creature looked out at the wide, shady road, and at the fields, all gold and white with fall dandelions and wild carrot, and seemed almost to flutter invisible wings with eagerness to be out there.

When one little yellow poll appeared, the old man opposite nodded violently, with grimaces of delight.

"Hullo, Sonny," he sang out softly. And the child's face showed, all distended with a smile, for an instant, above the window-sill, before it bobbed out of sight.

It was almost time for the school to be closed, when Daniel started up suddenly. "What's that," cried he. He heard the sharp swish of a switch, then a shrill wail, "O—o—oh!"

"What in creation's she doin' of to Sonny?"

The old man was lame, but he appeared to move across the street only the faster. The extra impetus necessary to swing that stiff limb seemed to overlap and carry the rest of the body with additional speed.

When he stood in the school-room door, there was a little flaxen-haired boy beside the desk, sobbing in his crooked arm, while the teacher switched his small legs.

Daniel Price stumped over to her, and caught her arm.

"What air you a-doin' of to Sonny?"

The child stopped sobbing, and peeped over his arm;

the other children stared, their mouths open and the corners drooping.

The teacher was a thin, light-haired woman, with small-pox marks on her high-featured face. She had an air at once aggressive and miserable.

"William has been disobedient," said she stiffly, "and I was obliged to punish him."

"Disobedient, hey? What's he been a-doin' of?"

"He has failed in his spelling-lesson every day for a week; and I told him I should be obliged to punish him if he did again. I was sorry to, but I felt that I must, for William's own good."

The school-teacher released her arm from the old man's grasp with determined dignity. That thin, sharp-elbowed arm was hard with muscles.

"Missed his spellin'-lesson, hey? Well, I know a good many other folks that miss spellin'-lesson, an' don't git thrashed fur it. What was the word he missed on, marm?"

"Elephant," replied the teacher shortly. "You may go to your seat now, William."

"Elephant, hey? Well, I s'pose you wouldn't miss on elephant, Miss Peters; I s'pose you wouldn't run no risk of a thrashin' on that. I s'pose an elephant to you's the same as a cow is to Sonny here—that is, in the way of spellin'. But there was a word we used to have put out to us in spellin'-school in my young days——"

Daniel paused a moment, and stood gazing at her. His old face broadened out; every seam in it took on an upward, facetious curve.

"Now, marm, I'm jest a-goin' to put out a word to you, if you're willin'."

"Well," said the teacher, trembling helplessly. Her indignation, to which she dared not give vent, rushed through her, and shook her like steam.

"Well, marm, if you'd spell—Syzygy."

"What?"

"Syzygy, marm."

"I don't understand the word, Mr. Price."

"*Sy-zy-gy.*"

"Is it in the dictionary?"

"Yes, marm, 'twas, the last I knew."

Then poor Miss Peters spelled. "Sizagy," said she.

"No, marm; that ain't jest right."

"Sizegey."

"No, marm."

There was a little chorus of soft titters from the small scholars. Miss Peters looked at them fiercely, and they were sober and attentive again.

"How do you spell it, Mr. Price?" Acknowledged defeat seemed to her now more dignified than further contest.

Old Daniel spelled it.

Miss Peters opened the big dictionary on her desk, and looked up the word, hoping that she should not find it. "Yes, you're right," said she. "I had never seen it before."

"Well, you needn't feel bad, marm, 'cause you couldn't spell it. I ain't goin' to give you a switchin'."

The whole school broke out in a laugh at that. The old man winked comically at them, as he said it. Miss Peters brought her ruler down on the desk with a heavy thud; her hard, thin face was flaming. "Silence!"

Daniel pretended to jump sideways with alarm, and that amused the scholars still more. Miss Peters had to pound on her desk again.

"Have you got any objections to lettin' Sonny go now?" said Daniel. "I've—got a leetle work I'd like have him help me about."

He gave a knowing look at Sonny.

"No; he can go," said the teacher, taking up a book, and clutching at her old prestige at the same time. It seemed to soar high above her head, like an aerial body, and her fingers only brushed it, however. "The second class in geography may take their places," said she nervously.

Sonny looked at her, then at his grandfather; he bobbed up from his seat, then went down again.

"You may go, William," said Miss Peters. Then

he pattered quickly down between the desks to his grandfather, and clung to his horny, protecting hand with his own soft little fingers.

Sonny wore baggy little trousers, and a checkered gingham tunic. His small face, which was generally upturned, was pink-cheeked and peaked-chinned; the mouth was small and sweet; the eyes china-blue, round and innocent. He was almost always smiling, as if to himself; he was now, and his late tears had not left a trace on his pretty cheeks.

When he reached the door, Daniel turned about and faced the teacher once more. He lifted his right hand, as if he were orating. "Miss Peters——"

"I'm afraid I can't stop to talk any longer, Mr. Price."

"Oh, I ain't a-goin' to hender you, Miss Peters. I jest wanted to say one thing; an' I want you to kinder lay it up an' think about it. When it comes to downright wickedness, there's some sense in thrashin'; but there ain't none unless it does come to it. If everybody was to be thrashed for spellin' wrong, there wouldn't be no room on this airth for any trees but birches, an' you couldn't hear the meetin'-bell for the swishin' of 'em. Come, Sonny."

"Did she hurt you much?" asked the old man, when he and the child were safely over in the little house across the way.

"Dreadful! Kin I have a pear, grandpa?"

"She shan't lay her hand on you ag'in, if I have my say about it."

"Kin I have a pear, grandpa?"

"Jest go right up-stairs an' help yourself, Sonny. Don't take none but what's mellar."

After Sonny had gone to bed that night, Daniel went over to his nephew George's to talk about the matter. George had gone down to the village, but his wife Hannah was at home. She was fleshy and pretty-faced and quick-spoken.

"Sonny ain't goin' to school to that woman another day," declared old Daniel, after he had finished the recital of his wrongs.

"Why, how can you get along if he don't, grandpa? You don't want him to grow up and not know anything."

"I reckon I kin learn him awhile."

"Land sakes, grandpa!"

"You kin pooh at it all you want to, Hannah. I kin learn him to spell as well as Miss Peters, I reckon, an' not thrash him to death, nuther."

"Now, grandpa, I don't b'lieve she meant to hurt him much."

"Don't keer what she meant; she won't git another chance whilst I live. Shan't nobody abuse Sonny whilst I'm round. When I ain't, I s'pose I shall have to grin an' bear it an' not say nothin.' See here, Hannah, you ain't forgittin' what I've told you about Sonny in case anythin' happened to me?"

"Of course I ain't, grandpa."

"You'll see to it he don't work too hard, an' has what he wants to eat? Sonny ain't pertickler, but there's some things he likes. You'll see to it he has his flapjacks for breakfast?"

"Land, yes, he shall have his flapjacks! Don't you worry, grandpa."

Daniel kept his resolution; Sonny never went again to Miss Peters's school. Every day the old man labored faithfully with him over spelling-book and reader, trying to call to mind, for love's sake, the forgotten learning of his youth. The two would watch gleefully Miss Peters hieing in angular majesty to the schoolhouse of a morning.

"There's madam," Daniel would say, chuckling, and poking Sonny. "Couldn't spell syzygy; could she, Sonny, hey?"

However, as the time wore on, old Daniel took less delight in his part of school-master. Not that the duties pertaining thereto were too onerous for his painstaking affection; but the position itself grew to be an unstable one. Sonny was a mild, sweet-tempered little fellow, but he disregarded entirely his grandfather's orders in the matter of education. Sonny, disobeying,

with his sweet, smiling little mouth, and his gentle, innocent eyes, was a perplexity.

"I can't do nothin' with him," the poor old man confessed, one day, to Hannah Price. "He won't learn his lessons; but there don't seem to be no sense in scoldin' of him for't, when he's so pleasant about it."

"It's turnin' out jest the way I thought 'twould," said Hannah. "You'd better make up your mind to send him back to school, grandpa."

"Who 's that goin' by?" said Daniel.

"That's John Stebbins. If you want Sonny to amount to——"

"John's goin' kinder lame, ain't he?"

"I don't know. Is he? I heard lately he wanted to marry Mrs. Bancroft, and she wouldn't have him."

"Silas Bancroft's widder?"

"Yes."

Daniel sat staring out of the window at the limping, gray-bearded, round-shouldered man passing up the road. Just then Miss Peters came out of the schoolhouse, and the two saluted each other stiffly.

Suddenly Daniel's old round face twitched, and all its hard seams deepened with laughter.

"What's the matter, grandpa?"

"Oh, nothin', nothin'!" But he still chuckled.

Some weeks later, Hannah came over to his house one afternoon with a piece of news.

"Guess what I heerd this morning, grandpa," said she.

The old man's eyes twinkled. "How should I know what you've heerd, Hannah?"

"Well, you can send Sonny to school again before long, I guess. Miss Peters is going to be married."

"Guess I knew that afore you did."

"How did you know?"

"Oh, I knew. John Stebbins' the one, ain't it?"

"Now, how did you know, grandpa?"

"Well, me an' John talked it over a leetle aforehand."

"Grandpa Price, what do you mean?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Hannah, if you won't say nothin'

'bout it. It kinder struck me, you know, when you said that 'bout Mrs. Bancroft's not havin' of him, that Miss Peters would make him a good wife."

"I never!"

Daniel chuckled between his sentences, as he went on:

"So one day I kinder dropped over there, to see if he didn't want ter sell a leetle of his trash-wood, an' I spoke 'bout it, kinder easy. I said somethin' 'bout its bein' pretty hard for him gittin' along the way he was, alone. An' then I sorter joked him 'bout gittin' married. 'Lots of nice girls round here,' says I; 'there's Miss Peters,' says I. 'I'm kinder afeared of her,' says he; 'she looks as if she might be pretty high-spirited.' 'No, she ain't, very,' says I; 'she looks a leetle that way, but she ain't. She's jest as gentle as a lamb.' Well, I kinder praised her up, an' I see he listened. The next Sunday night I watched, an' I see him go home from meetin' with her."

"Now, Grandpa Price, ain't you ashamed of yourself? You know she won't make any kind of a wife for him."

"Oh, p'rhaps she will, Hannah. Bein' in love works miracles, you know, sometimes."

Daniel's scheme proved successful; that was Miss Peters's last term. The old man was exultant. He peeped slyly in the window on the last day of the school, after the pupils had gone. He intended to gratify his malice—which was well tempered by good nature, after all—by a few facetious remarks to her on her approaching nuptials. He was nonplussed, however, to see the teacher with her head on her desk crying; and he withdrew softly.

"I wonder what on airth she was cryin' for," he thought. His simple old man's imagination could not conceive the true cause of her grief—that this poor, elderly, pock-marked, hard-tempered woman was weeping over the tender, shamefaced romance, the natural gold of her womanhood, with which she was to part forever on the next day when she married John Stebbins for a home and support.

"Mebbe she wouldn't like to be joked," said Daniel thoughtfully. "Well, she'll have a good home with John, and I'm glad on't. She's had a kind of a hard time, poor thing."

Miss Peters's successor was a pretty, happy-going girl, who was after Daniel's own heart. She was as lenient to Sonny as he could wish. He watched the boy trudge across the road to put himself under her easy rule, with satisfaction.

"Sonny's gittin' along fust-rate with the new teacher," he told Hannah Price. "She's real pleasant with him, an' he got a reward of merit last night. He's a-comin' over to show it to you. He's dretful tickled with it."

Old Daniel rose early of a morning, and laboriously made the fire, and fried the cakes in which Sonny's soul delighted. He covered them thickly with butter and maple syrup, and then watched the child eating them, with their sweetness a thousand times intensified in his own consciousness. While Sonny ate material cakes, old Daniel fed on some which might have served angels. He never ate his own breakfast until the boy had gone; he could not forego the exquisite delight of watching him, and that finer way of satisfying his own hunger. The sweetness of the very honey of love seemed trickling down his throat and through his blissful soul as he looked at his beloved child eating with such delight the food which he had prepared for him. What cared he for other breakfast while that lasted?

Daniel was a small pensioner of the war of 1812. He had always regarded his little quarterly dole from a grateful government as a noble income. He went to the selectmen's room once in three months for it, with an air of a prince claiming his revenue.

"It don't actilly seem to me, sometimes, as if I had any right to 't," he used to say, with a modest chuckle, which revealed his real pride and delight, like an opening door. "I only fit in that war 'bout three days, reely, an' the rest of the time I stayed in a fort. I didn't git hurt, as I know of, nuther. I don't s'pose I should had thought that gov'ment owed me anythin', if my

son William, Sonny's father, hadn't set out I could git it. An' arter I got it I thought there wa'n't no use in my worryin' over it. Ef gov'ment wanted to give me that money, it wa'n't none of my lookout. Gov'ment ought to know better'n me whether I deserved it or not. It's got more brains than one man. I s'pose, most likely, I was more vallyble in that war than I knew for. I tell you, the United States gov'ment is the best one in this world to work for."

Daniel was much troubled by the reflection that this fine income must cease at his death, and Sonny could then have no further benefit from it. He hoarded every cent which he could save from their simple expenses, and deposited it in the bank.

"Don't let 'em lay out no more on my buryin' than they kin help," he told Hannah, to whom he had confided the matter. "I never wanted to make a show. An' the rest's fur Sonny—every cent. There mustn't nobody else tech it. I'm agoin' to leave it with you, Hannah, to see to. When it comes to money-matters 'twixt relations, women is full as straight as men. Don't let George have any use on't."

Daniel had many worries, as any one must who loves either himself or another much. His ever-active anxiety was concerning Sonny's welfare after he should be gone. Would Hannah Price and George care for the child as faithfully and tenderly as he had? They had two boys of their own; how would little, pretty, petted Sonny fare in the same nest? The old man thought of it day and night; he often broached the subject to Hannah, but her good-humored assent did not satisfy him: he was still suspicious.

When Sonny had been in school with his new teacher a half-term or so, he went home one night and did not find his grandfather in the house as usual.

He looked about a little, and called, "Granpa!" several times; then he sat down and ate his supper. It was all set out for him on the table; the supper he liked best, too—gingerbread and milk, and plenty of sauce. There was a good fire in the stove. Every-

thing was very comfortable. After the boy had eaten his supper, he began calling "Granpa!" again.

The dusk was settling down fast. Sonny stood in the middle of the kitchen, his little face shining out like a star from the soft gloom, calling piteously, over and over, "Granpa! Granpa!"

It grew darker. Suddenly Sonny was wild with terror; the darkness and the loneliness seemed to hold terrible presences. His call spread out into an inarticulate howl, and he sprang out of the house and across the yard to his Aunt Hannah's, as he called her.

"What on earth's the matter, child?" said she.

He clung to her, choking with fear, trying to speak.

"Granpa," he gasped out finally.

"Grandpa! What's the matter with grandpa?"

"He's gone! He—ain't—there!"

"Is that all?" said Hannah, relieved. "He's gone down to the store for something or other, I guess, Sonny. You can just wait here till he comes back. You were afraid all alone there in the dark, wasn't you?"

Sonny, easily comforted, in the lamp-light, with people around him, composed himself to wait, and after a while fell asleep in his chair, his pretty head wagging sideways, his little pointed chin dipping down into his gingham breast.

Finally, Hannah was alarmed herself, as it grew later and Daniel did not appear. She sent George down to the village to inquire if he had been seen at the store, or at any of his wonted haunts. By midnight a search was fairly organized. Lanterns were flashing along the country roads; dark forms were running by and stooping now and then over some gloomy hollow, where a shadow looked like substance, to see if perchance poor old Daniel was lying there in some sore strait.

"He drew out his pension-money yesterday," whispered one. Then the surmises grew grim. Stretched out stiff and motionless in one of these black nooks they

pictured to themselves old Daniel; his chin would be tipped back, his hands clutching helplessly. Every time they stooped over a long shadow at the roadside, a horror, as of certainty, seized them.

But the picture existed only in their searching imaginations, never in life. A month passed by, and they had found no trace of old Daniel Price. The prevalent theory was that he had been murdered for the sake of his pension-money; but, if he had, the murderer was an adept in concealing his crime. The river and the neighboring ponds had been dragged, and the woods ransacked, but not a shred of the supposed victim found. Daniel had a brother over in Barnstable, a town about twenty miles distant, and the news was sent to him. George wrote on a forlorn conjecture that the old man might have taken it into his head to visit his brother.

"But it ain't any use," he told his wife. "Uncle Dan'l ain't seen his brother for twenty years; an' there never was much love lost between 'em. Uncle Cyrus is an odd stick. It ain't reasonable that he'd go off there now this way an' not say anything about it."

George settled down to this belief when no response came to the letter. At the end of a month they had nearly given up ever seeing old Daniel again. They had a little thrill of expectancy still on every new morning; but it was fast dulling. Sonny went to school as usual; he had cried some at first for his grandfather, but he no longer did. At times, when Hannah would not indulge him to an extent which he desired, he would appeal pitifully to the memory of his grandfather. "Granpa'd let me," he would say, "if he was here."

On these occasions, Sonny, with the artless and candid selfishness of childhood, suffered genuine regret for the absent Daniel. He would run raving over to his old home, and search through the rooms, to see if he had come.

But these occasions were few. Hannah Price treated Sonny with more leniency, generally, than she did her own boys, and the child was contented enough.

One night, about dusk, a limping old figure came plodding up the road to George Price's. There had been a fall of snow that day, and it was heavy walking. The figure pushed on resolutely. When it reached George Price's, the door opened suddenly, and a little form appeared in a radiance of yellow lamp-light.

"Sonny, Sonny!"

"Oh, granpa! granpa! Here's granpa! Aunt Hannah, Aunt Hannah, here's granpa!"

"Was you—a-lookin'—out fur—granpa, Sonny?"

"I was lookin' out to see if Tommy was comin'. He's gone down to the store to buy a rat-trap. Say, ain't that him down the road?"

"Glad to see granpa, ain't you, Sonny?"

Sonny flung his little arms tight around the old man's neck. "Don't you go off ag'in, granpa."

"No, I ain't never goin' to. I wouldn't ha' gone this time, if it hadn't been on your account, Sonny."

Then the two went into the house, Sonny running ahead, and crying, "Granpa's come! Aunt Hannah, look here, quick! Granpa's come!"

George Price and his wife appeared with white faces and awed eyes. They could not appreciate the simplicity of the marvellous, as could Sonny on his overlooking heights of childhood. Then, too, they had beliefs and theories, whose overthrow shocked them; and Sonny had nothing but his infantile acceptance of the situation.

"Where have you been, grandpa?" stammered Hannah, at length.

"You act mighty queer, seems to me, you an' George," said Daniel. "I've jest been over to Barnstable, to Cyrus's, to stay a few weeks."

"Over to Barnstable, to Cyrus's!"

"Yes; I hadn't seen him for twenty years, an' I thought 'twas 'bout time. He didn't know me, as 'twas, at fust. 'Tain't right fur brothers to be livin' so."

"Why on earth didn't you say anything about it?"

"Why, I didn't see no need of makin' a great lot of

talk 'bout it. I thought I could jest slip off kinder quiet, an' come back when I got ready."

"I should think you was crazy! Why, we've been 'most scared to death about you. Didn't Cyrus get that letter I wrote him?"

"What letter?"

"I wrote to him, and asked him if he'd seen anything of you."

"Lord! Cyrus never goes to the post-office. I don't believe he's had a letter for forty years."

"Everybody's been hunting for you."

"Huntin' for me! Well, I dun know what ye were thinkin' 'bout. I should ha' s'posed y'd thought I was 'bout old enough to take care of myself."

As soon as he could escape from the wonder and reproaches, dimly tinctured with joy over his return, he retreated to his own little home with Sonny. After he had got a fire started, he sat down in his old chair, and took the child up on his knee.

"Look a-here, Sonny, I'm a-goin' to ask you somethin', an' you mustn't never say nothin' 'bout it to your Aunt Hannah. You'll rec'lect, won't you? Now, Sonny, I jest want to know how your Aunt Hannah treated you arter I was gone. Was she real pleasant with you?"

Sonny reflected. Then his innocent eyes kindled. "She wouldn't let me go a-slidin' on the river, 'cause she thought the ice was too thin: it wa'n't."

"She didn't thrash you, nor nothin', 'bout it, did she?"

"No; she give me some cake if I'd stay to home. The ice wa'n't too thin, granpa."

"Didn't she thrash you once while I was gone?"

"No; I guess she didn't, granpa."

"You'd rec'lect ef she did, wouldn't you?"

"I guess so."

"Was she real smilin' an' good to you?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"She didn't never give Tommy nor John pie an' not give you any, did she, now?"

"Oh, granpa! she give me some once when they didn't have any, 'cause, she said, I was the littlest."

"She did, hey? Did you have enough to kiver you up warm, nights?"

"I guess so."

"Well, there's another thing; did you have flapjacks fur breakfast every mornin', Sonny?"

"Yes, I did. Say, granpa, Aunt Hannah's flapjacks is better than yourn."

"Well, Sonny, you must allers be a good boy, an' mind your Aunt Hannah. I guess she'll take real good care of you when granpa ain't round."

Daniel asked no more questions. Presently the child fell asleep in his arms; and he sat there for a long time, holding him, and looking straight ahead, with an expression as if he saw a bright future.

This true story is written for ROMANCE by Fred M. Hopkins.

AN ECCENTRIC PARSON.

AMONG the most widely known of New England's itinerant preachers, a little over half a century ago, was Lorenzo Dow of eastern Connecticut. He was a very eccentric man but, nevertheless, a power as a revivalist, and renowned for his shrewd knowledge of human nature. Scores of troubled souls went to "Elder" Dow with their sorrows and perplexities, and he always had a comforting word or a wise suggestion for them.

On one occasion, a poor old widow had her feather-bed stolen. She was sure that she knew the thief, but was unable to prove her case. One day the idea struck her that, if "Elder" Dow would consent to preach in the neighborhood, he might somehow help her to recover her lost property. The more she thought the idea over, the better she liked it. Finally, she wrote him a long letter, stating her case as clearly as she could. She ended by asking him to come and preach in the district schoolhouse, at an early date.

In a short time a reply came, making an appointment for a Sunday afternoon some weeks distant.

The intervening weeks wore away very slowly to the old lady. The announcement that Dow was going to preach created a furore in the neighborhood. The excitement steadily increased, and when the appointed day arrived, the district schoolhouse was not large enough to hold all the hearers that had gathered from the sparsely-settled region.

Immediately on his arrival Dow went to the home of the old lady. He listened to her story of the theft, and was convinced that her suspicions were correct.

"Will Mr. B—— attend the meeting?" asked Mr.

Dow. On being assured that he would, Dow began planning to catch the guilty culprit.

Sunday came. After the customary congregational singing and devotional exercises, "Elder" Dow announced that his text would be "Thou shalt not steal." Singling out the suspected person, Dow began a most direct and powerful sermon aimed apparently at him. He quoted the Biblical prohibitions against theft; he dwelt upon the wickedness of the crime, and portrayed the terrible punishment that would surely follow.

Dow was positive that the suspect showed signs of uneasiness, and he warmed to the task. The thief's nervousness increased and Dow preached the harder. The preacher began to be sure of the success of his plan, and he digressed a little to tell the story of the poor old lady's stolen feather-bed. The audience began to get excited.

"Friends," said Mr. Dow, "I know the thief."

The excitement increased and the suspected party gave a perceptible wince.

Leaning forward, confidentially, Dow continued: "Yes, I know who the thief is, and he is in this room."

All held their breath in wonder and amazement, while the thief seemed to be losing command of himself.

Straightening up his tall, muscular frame, the preacher slowly repeated:

"Yes, I know the thief and he is here before me. Shall I point him out to you?" And Dow began raising his hand directly toward the seat occupied by Mr. B——.

"There he is," said Dow. "He sits in the front row, and has a feather on the end of his nose." The thief lost control, and made a fierce grab to get the imaginary feather. The audience caught sight of his movement and rightly located the rascal. The poor fellow realized his situation, made a confession, and promised to return the feather-bed, which he did later.

The old lady was very grateful to the eccentric parson, while the neighborhood told and retold the story until it became a local tradition.

Whether "Margaret," in the following story, written for ROMANCE by Violette Hall, was right or wrong, must be determined by each individual reader. Some women love to make martyrs of themselves. They forget that in so doing they sometimes martyr others who are innocent.

PROMISED.

"I WILL come home with my shield or on it."

"You are off to a battle of books, not blows."

The girl spoke lightly, but she shuddered as one does when some undefined thought is blown against the consciousness by a gust of foreboding.

The tall pines of the Hans Vosenkill glen stood thickly about them in awesome silence. A slight breeze stirred the vines of wild grapes into spectral carnival. A belated robin flew away and still another, leaving them alone. The young man was tearing a spray of Michaelmas daisies, blackened and bitten by frost, into tatters as he spoke.

"If I could only have done this years ago, Margaret! It will seem an eternity before I can make a home for you now. But I can work."

He clutched at his forehead impatiently, as though to pluck out pain.

Margaret's small hand followed his. "You are working best for me, dear, when you are thinking of yourself. Why, Amos, how your temples throb! You are killing yourself with study already. I dare not think what you will do when you are in the midst of it all."

He turned away evasively, staring fixedly into the clear brook hissing at their feet. With a slight bodily movement he seemed to shake himself from the grasp of some unwelcome thought, bringing his gaze, full of tenderness, home to the sweet girl-face.

"Dear one," he said, trying to slip a golden band upon her finger, "wear this in token——"

Margaret drew back.

"What have I told you already many times? My word is given. Love needs no binding."

"Then to please me, dearest——"

"Not even to do that. It is an insult to truth."

The bell in the chapel pealed the evening hour.

"The Lord is in His holy temple," murmured Amos.

Both heads were bowed a moment in silence. Then Margaret looked up with wet lashes.

"Think of these people coming to you there to learn the blessed truth. We must not let ourselves grow weary in the waiting."

Amos turned smiling from her earnest eyes.

"I need no pledge, from you, dearest," he said.

She slipped her hand proudly into his.

"Till death us do part," she answered.

. . . . . .

A cold September moon struggled through masses of clouds piling above the Catskill mountains, as if in apology for the early extinction of light in the scattered hamlets lying along their base.

In dim outline it marked the figure of a man moving softly about in homely occupation through one of the isolated cottages, a tall man, unshaven, grotesquely dressed, and with no covering upon his large, muscular feet. Cautiously, as if in dread of rousing the sleeping, he sped to the neighboring spring and filled a large pail with water. This he poured into a tea-kettle, replacing it upon the stove. With the same stealthy step he slipped into the wood-shed, and hurriedly cut great logs of wood into uniform lengths. With these he piled the deep wood-box.

"There," he muttered, "now mother will be comfortable. Flee to the mountains! Flee! It is the appointed time!"

With the tense expression of eagerness momentarily deepening upon his face, he crept softly up the back-stairs into his attic bed-chamber. From an old-fashioned chest of drawers he pulled a rude deer-skin bag, rapidly sweeping into it various articles lying on

the rafters above him; dried skins of snakes, a black bear's paw, smooth stones, and bits of withered herbs.

This done, he let himself out at the low side-door and was off in long, cat-like springs down the sloping fields. The tall grass, heavy with dew, wet him to the knees. At the brink of the Vosenkill, where the narrow wooded glen stretched black before him, he paused an instant, peering into the rushing stream for safe foot-holds. Dimly discerning them, he jumped from stone to stone, unmindful of the stinging cold of the water about his ankles. Over the slippery pine-needles of the opposite embankment, through the dust of the highway, here in a bed of nettles, and there in rough furrows of ploughed ground, he sped, slackening nowhere his pace until he came into the shadow of a low cottage, buried in trailing hop-vines. He gathered up a handful of pebbles that lay underneath the eaves, and softly pelted a tiny window jutting out over a decaying porch.

Two women in the small back living-room at work, surrounded by gay heaps of carpet-rags and with rapid-growing balls in their laps, looked instinctively toward the open door of the bed-room, where lay the sick girl whom they were "watching with."

"What's that?" asked one, evidently a recent guest, as she was still diving into a dropsical satchel.

"It must be Amos after Jimmy," measured off the other in subdued, slow syllables, between her searches for blue, or yellow, or red scraps.

"I'd better go up after him, mebby, or they'll get Jane woke up between 'em."

She returned, her errand completed, though she allowed but a comma's break in her recital—"an' not know how they done it. When these rovin' spells come onto Amos, no matter what the time is"—here she glanced at the old Dutch clock, which registered the flight of more than half the night—"he comes after my poor foolish Jimmy, and off they start right into the mountains. He thinks they're doin' the Lord's misshun someway, but they only holler in the woods

an' tramp 'round a spell. Sometimes they go clear to th' other side of Roundtop and back. Amos's head give way when he was to college, studyin' for the ministry. Mis' Wiley's Margaret was goin' to marry him, an' she won't give him up now. The new rector, Mr. Wheatcroft, thinks his eyes of her, too, an' th' hull family's against this foolishness 'bout Amos. He goes to her for everything jest like a child. He'll be there to-night before they get off. You see."

The absorbing interest of the topic was responsible for the direct proximity of two red strips in the carpet, an altogether unorthodox arrangement in "hit or miss" designs, that demanded prompt remodelling on the part of the visitor.

The hostess went to one of the small-paned windows, and drew up the thick paper shade.

"Come here," she said, "look! What did I tell you?"

She was pointing across her green pasture-field to a house directly opposite in the full glare of the moonlight. A woman's figure, with a white scarf about it, leaned from an upper casement. The pointing finger, at first aimed directly at her, began to descend slowly along the pane, following the intention of the narrator to put the listener on a visual level with two male figures drawn up by the road-side.

"There they be! There they be!" she whispered, triumphantly. "Oh! she's come down. Ain't she givin' Amos somethin'? She was expectin' him to-night, most likely. He's always worse when the moon's full. There's things to eat in that bundle. I b'lieve she's puttin' that scarf 'round his neck—does seem 'most like a frost. Goodness gracious! Look there! It's the rector on his white horse—goin' over to Jake Whitterker's I s'pose. He always thinks he's dyin' if it's rainy or cold. How slow he rides past, don't he?"

A sharp descent in the road abruptly cut the horseman from the scene; letting him down, by winding stages, into the eerie ravine of Fawnsleap. Once, hairy equine ears started up at sound of the masterful voice, but dropped quickly again. He struck the pom-

mel of his saddle with a violence that nearly unseated him, gashing his glove and spurting hot blood upon the white mare's back. "She shall not be sacrificed," he said. "She shall not."

. . . . . .

It was a soft, warm August day. Through the open doors and windows of the little chapel, the eye wandered up long slopes of changing color. Hills, crowned with deep green chestnuts and birches, rolled southward in silvery squares of oats, flanking pink clover-fields or lying close to yellowish patches of rye, with here and there a few white feet of blossoming buckwheat. The forsaken red clay road wound in one long, lazy curve toward Stony Clove.

Through the early portions of the service, in all weakness of flesh, the rector felt the torpor of the hour pressing upon him, but when he had mounted the pulpit steps, this mortal seemed almost to have put on immortality, so far above and beyond his earthly surroundings were the words he spoke. The sermon was not within reach of the assembled audience, although they failed to realize the fact, so strongly did they feel the personal power of the speaker. His text, "Hide not your light under a bushel," dealt with mistaken ideas of duty and a wasting of God-given talent.

Amos had come in, drawn by the first notes of the organ, and stationed himself next to Margaret in the choir. He watched her closely through the hymn before the sermon, and when the Amen had been sung and the people sank into their seats, he clapped his hands together excitedly, and demanded more in a boisterous whisper. Margaret gently soothed him into quiet, but during the sermon he grew restless again, and after the ascription she took him quietly away through a side door, without waiting for the last hymn and closing prayers.

The rector did not linger to-day, as was his custom, when service was over, among the throng about the church-doors. He felt limp and nervous from his oratorical flight. The commendatory, "You done well,"

grated upon his ears. He struck out into a narrow meadow-path, leaving behind him the main thoroughfare.

A few capricious turns of the foot-way brought him unexpectedly upon Margaret, on a bank of ferns under a spreading chestnut. She was massing together sprays of maiden-hair and softly singing to Amos as her white fingers moved among the cool green stems.

Her face was turned from the rector, and she was unconscious of his approach, until she glanced over her shoulder, startled by his voice.

"I shall have to assert my priestly authority," he said quietly, "and recommend that you remain through service hereafter. We missed your voice in the last hymn, Margaret." Then, with a sudden change of tone, "I am afraid I preached only to you to-day."

"I am afraid you did," she said.

The immobility of her manner stung him to impatience. "I wish you were as much touched by it as some of those who failed to understand a word."

Margaret's head was bent over the ferns on her lap.

"Don't! Don't!" she cried.

Wheatcroft felt the anguish in her voice, with a lover's joy in the tender misery. He leaned over her with a rapturous thrill of expectancy.

"Only abandon this wild fancy," he entreated.

She shrank farther away from him and closer to the other. "Margaret, look at me," he persisted. "Speak to me! You are torturing me cruelly."

"I have nothing new to say," she repeated wearily. "I am promised to Amos."

"Promised!" he broke out bitterly. "There is nothing so cruel under heaven as a woman when she won't see. Your duty there is done. It has been taken from you. What you have promised was to give yourself to him in marriage. Fate has made that impossible. You tell me that he needs you and leans upon you. That he cares more for you than for anything in the world, and yet you know that his affection is nothing more than the faithfulness of a dog. If I should take you away, he would miss you for a time, to be sure,

but any one who would do for him what you do could fill your place. I need you every hour of every day, and what I can give you, your whole soul is crying for. This cramped existence among these uncongenial people smothers your artistic instincts. The monotony kills you. What your nature craves is a world of opportunity. Think how, with every taste in common, we could work together. Will you give up all this, Margaret, and ruin my every thought of happiness for the sake of a man who is as dead as if he lay three feet under the sod?"

Her lips trembled piteously, but she said quite distinctly, "No argument can change me." Then laying her hand against her heart, "I know here that I am right. You say that another could supply his wants as well as I. Who would give him the tender care that I do? He is my first and last waking thought. When I gave him my promise of fidelity, it was for the time until death should part us. He is not dead. He is a living being, with humanity's sorrows to be soothed and mended. If he were my husband and thus afflicted, you would not dare to bid me leave him."

There was a note of pathos in her voice that stirred even Amos. He stationed himself between them.

"Go off," he mumbled doggedly. "Go away."

"Do," pleaded Margaret.

She watched him leave her, with the intensity of suffering that paralyzes into momentary indifference. But, when he had gained the brow of the hill above her, she was conscious of a great physical revulsion. All the tenderness of her nature rose up to choke her. He could not see Margaret, and he did not know that she could see him. Fagged by his effort of the morning, and this useless battling with inflexible principle, he leaned against a gnarled tree in an attitude of meek despair, looking off upon the mute valley, with both hands tightly interlocked as if he might have halted to muster courage to go down into the outer world alone.

Tall and broad-shouldered, his physical comeliness was at once softened and enhanced by his clerical cloth-

ing. He took off his beretta, and let the wind lift the short locks about his temples. Margaret was sufficiently an artist and a poet to feel that this was a very beautiful creature who was suffering for her. She turned to Amos excitedly, spurred by a great longing for action, usefulness, duty: "Am I of any comfort to you? Can I make you happy? Do you love to hear me sing?"

"Sometimes," he said indifferently; "other times it makes me tired. Now I do. Sing some more. Let the sea make a noise and all that therein is."

At random she selected the old hymn, "O Paradise," unconsciously putting into it all her own suffering and the burden she was bearing for Wheatcroft.

The man hurrying to get out of reach of the sweet voice was alive to the pain in each note. He had not realized before that she suffered as keenly as he himself, but only that her surroundings were uncongenial, that she was making a mistake and that he must help her. Mostly he felt that she was torturing him.

When the plaintive voice trilled,

"I want to sin no more,
I want to be as pure on earth as on Thy spotless shore,"

he merely uncovered his head. But at the words,

"Where loyal hearts and true stand ever in the light,"

his rapid strides stopped abruptly. A strange expression came into his face. A new belief in the sacrifice, a new pride in her loyalty and truth, flashed over him. He had come to the opinion he held by a long course of reasoning, but suddenly this all seemed vague and illusive. He had occasionally encountered the same impression, which was purely emotional, but it had never before worn anything of its present vividness.

"A good woman's conscience," he murmured, "a good woman's conscience is the surest guide, after all."

The sun had made a flaming exit behind the mountains, dashing its over-flow of glory in yellow patches here and there in the pasture-fields, upon the irregular rail-fences and the broad backs of recumbent cattle,

transforming them all into glowing gold. Nature was in her earliest spring freshness. The meadows lay, on either hand, in long, unbroken curves of dazzling green; the trees, either in blossom or the first feathery unfolding of pale verdure, sheltered old songsters pitching their voices in new keys of exultation.

At this season, when the soul puts out fresh shoots of sensibility, the body craves action. The restlessness of spring-time and the melancholy of the twilight hour among such surroundings spurred Margaret into uncontrollable longing. She sat upon the lower rail of a decaying fence, and nervously sketched Fawnsleap, with the Clove lying in deep shadow for a background. Never before had she realized so keenly the inadequacy of her art, the need of instruction, and of attrition with others who felt Nature as she did. Her emotional energy burned at her finger-tips and her strained eyes, but refused to come forth upon the paper.

Suddenly she saw the rector coming toward her, and she felt none of her old scruples against a meeting. Rather, his approach seemed in some way a real relief.

Their natures were so thoroughly in attune that each came into the other's consciousness without the usual stir of admission. There was all that great peace between them, of perfect understanding. Apologies and explanations were never necessary.

They had walked a long distance through the green pastures, in oblivion of everything else save the sense of perfect companionship, when Wheatcroft, with an effort, came back to the moment's necessity.

"It is nearly a year since I have really spoken with you, Margaret. I have tried to be considerate."

"You have been very good."

"I thought perhaps you might be right, that Sunday last August, when I heard you singing of loyal hearts in the glen with Amos. But now when I am so soon to leave you——"

"So soon to leave me?" she cried, startled herself by the unconscious misery in her voice.

"I must. It has come to that—that I must have

some claim upon you or go away. I have tried faithfully of late to respect your position, and to look upon you only as I would were you an unfortunate man's wife. I have given the experiment a thorough trial. It won't do. I must leave you. I have gone over the old ground continually this past year, weighing it by every conceivable standard, and conscientiously trying to shut self out. I believe I have done that—but I always come back to my first decision. And now that I have determined to leave this place, either with you or without you, I feel compelled to make one more appeal to your forbearance. You know that I would not tempt you to give up this sacrifice if I were not thoroughly convinced that you were in the wrong. There is no possible way of making it right for a woman of your ability to live out her life in this place, among these people, with such a chain upon her. You do not realize what you are undertaking."

"Not realize?" she repeated slowly, "I wish that were true. But I have lived too many years, with each day so like the one before that they scarcely seemed to have beginning or end, not to know what taking root here means. It is this life-sapping monotony that is hardest to bear. Trouble eats, and eats, and some time the end comes, but this only holds back, holds back forever! It is never finished." She laughed almost wildly. "Often I feel that, if the trees would only stand upon end, or the earth tremble and shake us up a bit, I could endure it better."

"If you should only try what it means to really live once, Margaret!" Wheatcroft began, "I think you should give me credit for knowing something of duty. This might be said to come within my special province."

He was smiling down upon her now, in a great flood of reverential love. His shoulders stood between her and the black shadows.

Margaret drew in a long breath of gratification. They had reached the little mossy knoll, overlooking the Vosenkill glen. She walked a few feet apart, looking meditatively down into its eerie depths.

A sound of voices, raised in hot argument, jarred the twilight stillness. Amos and Jimmy, travel-stained from a long tramp, emerged into the fading light. Jimmy, usually the soul of good humor, had lost his temper, and was in a contradictory and teasing mood. Finally he cuffed his companion smartly upon the face.

"Jimmy," said Amos in a stentorian voice, "the Bible says, 'if a brother smite thee on one cheek, turn to him the other.'"

With evident satisfaction the other was smitten with redoubled vigor.

"But!" continued Amos, laying down his bag of treasure, "over the leaf it says, 'Smite the smiter.'"

Accordingly, he fell upon his tormentor in a heavy storm of blows, Jimmy attempting nothing farther than feline scratches upon the offending hands as they bore down on him.

Wheatcroft started toward them. Margaret laid a detaining hand upon his arm.

"Don't interfere, don't!" she begged. "Amos!" she called, darting down the hill over the damp pine-needles, with the rector awkwardly slipping along behind.

At the first sound of her voice, the warrior's arm fell to his side.

"See there!" he said, holding out a bleeding hand. The other seized the propitious opportunity to skulk away. Margaret led Amos to the brook and bathed his wounds, binding up his hand with her handkerchief.

"Do you know that you are keeping me waiting all this time for my answer?" urged Wheatcroft, as the chapel bell called him to evening prayers. "This must be good-by—unless——"

She was tying a knot in the bandage, only half-looking up as she answered, "Good-by. I am promised to Amos."

Here is a mining story of California just after the great stampede of 1849. It throbs with life in every line, and is from the pen of H. S. Brooks in the *Overland Monthly*.

PROFESSOR CRAZY.

In the summer of '50 I was mining on the Stanislaus River, at "Shorty's Bar." There was a large company of us, forty men in all, for we were going to turn the river in order to work the spot known as "the deep pool." We all knew that we had a sure thing, for the bars just above and below had been rich, and it was well known that "the pot hole," as it was called, must be much richer, for it was the deepest place anywhere in the vicinity, and we had prospected it slightly by coffer dams, getting splendid prospects, but never able to reach the bed rock on account of the inrush of water. A lot of our boys had worked above and below, and were very comfortably fixed. We were known to be the richest company on the river, and having, as I have said, a dead sure thing, our credit was good anywhere within ten miles. It was the custom in those days with the strong companies to buy almost everything on credit and pay out of the first clean-up. A couple of weeks generally paid off old scores and left a clean run for the remainder of the season.

We had a very pretty camp, high and dry on the upper bar, as it was called, forty feet above the bed of the channel. Here were several clusters of fine old live oak and white oak trees. Under these we pitched our tents, and ran up our brush shelter. We all messed together for the sake of convenience. The camp boarding house was built of "shakes." We had a first-rate Chinese cook, and a Chinese boy to clean dishes, chop wood and do chores. There were some mighty nice fellows in that company, if it was "a mixed crowd." We were known as "The Cosmopolitan Company," for the

reason, I suppose, that we had among us French, Spa
ish, Portuguese, English, Danes, Swedes, Norwegian
Canadians—and what not. We had sailors, a captai
a wheelright, two carpenters, two blacksmiths, a sai
maker, a farmer, a school-master, and so on. My par
ner and I were, I think, the only men in the compar
without a trade. I was not much more than a boy the
and had never settled down to anything. I came o
to California from Prince Edward's Island in 1850 o
one of my uncle's ships, expecting to go back on he
but when the first and second mate, cook, doctor and a
hands scattered for the mines, I thought it about tim
for me to go, too; or what use would it have been f
me to stay by the ship?

I had had but one partner since I was in the mine
that was Harry Knox, a Virginian—the finest fello
that ever lived, I believe. Poor fellow, he is dead lon
since. Harry went with me into the Cosmopolita
Company, and we camped together as usual. We ha
a little tent beneath one of the fine old live oaks.
was mighty comfortable, I can tell you, after cookin
for one's self so long, to have our grub cooked for us, ou
wood chopped, dishes cleaned, and so on; to have noth
ing to do about the camp after work, except to wash ou
flannel shirts and repair damages. That was the ari
tocracy of mining! We dressed ourselves up until w
were regular dandies on Sundays, when we were o
duty, and were generally as nicely fixed, as snug an
comfortable, as could be. I never took kindly to an
sort of domestic work, but Harry was as smart as a wo
man with a needle, and as bright and useful about
camp; and he, knowing my weakness, took care that
had little or nothing of woman's work to do. Ah
those were happy, careless, independent days. W
had a splendid mess. The Canadians saw to it that w
had plenty of fish from the river, fine salmon in the sea
son. The Indians brought us venison, and we used t
kill lots of small game for ourselves, such as "cotton
tails," "jackass rabbits," quail and the like.

Our captain—the captain of our company—was

little bit of a fellow from Maine—the smallest man in the crowd, I believe—but he was tough as a pine knot. His name was Paine. Somehow he didn't look small, even when he was alongside of larger men; for he stood square and firm as though he took hold of the ground—held himself straight, kept his head well up, and had a manly, large-hearted way with him. He always wore a gray suit of some sort of strong homespun, and a yellow felt hat. Both must have been of excellent quality, for I cannot remember that he ever changed them. He always looked exactly the same—Sundays, week days, holidays and all times. He was a farmer, but good at any sort of work; knew how to lay hold of anything and everything; could use any sort of tool; never lost his temper; always had a pleasant smile on his face and a pleasant word on his tongue. His under lip projected just the least bit, I remember; he had rather a fair complexion, a high color, and spoke just a little through his nose—but a very little—just enough to be pleasant; for we all liked him, and therefore liked his peculiarities. He talked very seldom, gave his orders shortly and briefly, but without the least attempt at bossing, and nobody ever thought of disputing him; for he always did exactly the right thing in the right way, and everybody knew it. After he left mining he settled on a fine farm in Wisconsin, I have heard, and became a very prosperous man.

I must describe the lay of the land, to make things clear. The principal feature of the surroundings was the "Table Mountain." At the time I thought it only a local phenomenon, and we used to wonder a great deal how it came to be so flat. Its course was, or appeared to be, diagonal to the Stanislaus, and crossed the river some six or eight miles above us. I say crossed the river, when I should say, I suppose, the river crossed it. Where the stream had cut through, the walls fell from the surface perpendicularly several hundred feet, and then slanted down to the bend of the river at an angle of forty-five degrees or thereabouts, covered with a dense growth of chapparal. There was

a trail right back of our camp which led across the table-land to Jim Town. The mountain seemed to make a horse-shoe bend in there, and right in the bend there was a strong spring of water, which made a green patch all the year round, very noticeable among the dry, barren surroundings. Below us a mile or two was the cañon, and from where the table-land was cut by the stream down the cañon, some eight or ten miles in all, had been the richest portion of the river. About a mile above the cañon there was a ford where the trail crossed to strike the Stockton road. That was the way home, and we boys used to look at it wistfully enough sometimes, especially when we were a little down on our luck. This trail was quite a cut-off to Jim Town, though it was not much traveled, being only known to those familiar with that part of the country. Looking right across the river the land rolled, making the round hills, so familiar to Californians, partly covered with a dense undergrowth of chapparal and manzanita, then shaven perfectly smooth, and in the spring yellow, purple, pink and amethyst with a varying growth of wild flowers. Our bar was the prettiest spot on the whole river.

One Sunday in April, a little before noon, Harry and I were lying down under the live oaks, taking it easy after a pretty hard week's work, when a strange-looking old fellow came up the Jim Town trail, which crossed the bar just back of our camp. He was driving three heavily-packed mules, or rather leading the foremost mule, the others following. He was a queer-looking character, quite a rare spectacle for those parts, and we watched him as he came up, both of us too curious to speak. He was tall, very spare, and slightly bent, dressed in a complete suit of rusty black and a tall "stove-pipe" hat—a costume which we had never seen before in the mines. He must have had the hat a long time; for though it had kept its shape, having evidently been preserved with jealous care, the edges were worn nearly white, as also portions of the rim, both front and back. The elbows, knees and seams of the

black suit were in pretty much the same condition. He had lank, straight hair, apparently bleached by the sun, a long, worn-looking face, with a suffering, far-away look about the pinched, drawn mouth; and I noticed particularly very long—unusually long—thin, flexible fingers. He was a gentleman though, that was certain, of a class not often seen at that time in those mountains. I took him to be a French Southerner.

The morning had been very hot; the breeze rarely struck the river at that season until afternoon. The old fellow was pretty well fagged out, and just as he was in front of our tent, the pack of the foremost mule turned, and he gave a broken-down sort of sigh as he stooped to fix it. Harry and I sprang up, and after righting his pack it occurred to us both at the same moment that the old man had better take a rest; but Harry spoke first—he was always the quicker—and said:

"Professor"—and the title seemed to me most appropriate—"Professor, your animals seem to be a little used up; better take off the pack and breathe them a little. It is just about noon, and we shall be glad to have you stay and take a meal with us. You can make Jim Town easy enough if you start from here at three. We'll help you with your pack, and start you off fresh and good as new."

Well, the old gentleman looked so grateful that we had the pack off in a minute, picketed out his animals to grass, and then Harry, without saying a word, brought him a little tin pannikin of toddy, and then laid him out a towel, soap and water for a wash. He had just freshened up a little when the gong struck for dinner, and the three of us walked over to the boarding-house. The boys were all seated when we entered, for we had sharp appetites those days. Captain Paine's seat at the head of the table was vacant, and Harry, hearing that the captain was busy down at the race, gave it to the stranger, we taking our seats beside him. The boys all looked at the new-comer curiously, but kindly; for, as I have said, they were a fine set of fellows.

"Professor," said Harry, "I have not learned your name yet."

"Crescie is my name," he replied, "Doctor Crescie; Cres-c-ie," he said, repeating the syllables and accenting the last two vowels.

"Professor Crescie, gentlemen," said Harry, introducing him and sticking to the title.

The Professor arose and bowed, whereupon, as I was glad to see, the boys all rose to welcome the old gentleman. Before they had time to sit down again, or recover from their surprise, he said a short grace and pronounced a benediction, saying:

"May the blessing of God rest upon this hospitable roof and upon all beneath it; Amen."

This took our men a little aback, for we were not accustomed to ceremony of any kind in the mines, or to grace before meat; but I could see they did not like the Professor any the less. All of them looked at him curiously, however, from time to time, when they thought he was unobservant of them.

After dinner the three of us walked over to the tent and lay down in the shade. I don't know why I have called the stranger the "old gentleman," for he was not old—scarcely over forty, I should think, but he had seen hard times evidently, and his unsuitable attire, dusty and travel-stained, enhanced a certain weary, worn-out look. I noticed that all the men alluded to him as "the old man." After a while, being rested and refreshed, he became quite talkative, and we learned to our surprise that we were to have him for our neighbor—that is, a neighbor for those parts.

"I am going to run a tunnel into the Table Mountain, gentlemen," he said; "up yonder, where you see that green spot."

"A tunnel!" said Harry, "what for—water?"

"For water? Ah, no! For gold," he replied. "I shall strike water no doubt, plenty of it, and it will not be unwelcome, for I shall raise a little something there—some corn, melons, garden stuff, and a field of clover

for pasture, where Nature has evidently prepared it for the hand of man."

"For gold!" said Harry sharply, giving him a keen look, and on the sly touching his forehead to me significantly. "Did I understand you to say for gold—up there on the top of the mountain?"

I must tell you that at this time nobody had dreamed of gold in the Table Mountain, or any other mountain, but in the river, creek and gulch channels. So our surprise was natural.

"Yes, for gold," said the old gentleman, and with a combative air; for gold—why not? You are mining in the channel of a living stream. I propose to mine in the channel of a dead one. "Yes," seeing our surprise, "a dead river—one to which your little stream here compares as a rivulet to the Mississippi. This table-land which you see is not a mere local formation. It has its origin in the lofty volcanic region, far away from here in Calaveras. It comes down on the north side of the Stanislaus, and causes a continuous elevated ridge more than two thousand feet above the river. Just below the ferry the river—the Stanislaus I mean—has broken through, but it reappears a little southwest of Columbia and continues on the south side of the river for a great many miles. Now," said the Professor, warming with his subject, his eyes glistening, and his pale, worn face lighting up with enthusiasm, "this so-called Table Mountain, the summit of which is covered by a heavy bed of basaltic lava, occasionally distinctly columnar, is nothing but an ancient river channel of some kind, and what other channel could it have been save that of a river? This little stream," looking at the Stanislaus contemptuously, "and other kindred streams running parallel to it, are but a modern formation—a thing of yesterday. The great stream which I am about to explore runs nearly at right angles to them. I have explored its course, its character, its fossil remains, as evidenced in places where there has been an outwash occasioned by the modern streams. Yes,"

continued the Professor kindling, "I have found remains of animals of the Pliocene—of the upper tertiaries—of the group which preceded the era of volcanic activity—the group which lived upon this earth in countless thousands of years ago, although their geological day was still but as yesterday. They lived in an age when the rivers all ran thousands of feet above their present channel. I have found remains of the rhinoceros, of an animal allied to the hippopotamus, of an extinct species of horse, and of a species allied to the camel—all peculiar to the deposits underlying the lava, and which did not survive the great catastrophe by which the forests and streams in which they lived were annihilated. I have found the imprints of leaves differing from those of any trees now known to California, and also distinct from the miocene tertiaries of Oregon, Nebraska, or any other portion of the continent. Yes, yes, wonderful indeed are the changes which have taken place throughout the entire Sierra."

By this time quite a lot of our boys had sauntered up to listen, and were looking significantly and compassionately at one another, as Harry had done at me. But Portugee Jake, or Big Jake, as we sometimes called him, took it all in as gospel truth, and sat with his eyes dilated, fixed upon the Professor, his mouth wide open, and a curious expression on his face of supreme bliss and edification whenever the speaker got off a particularly long and extra-scientific term, although, poor fellow, we all knew he couldn't understand a word of it.

"But how can you call it a river?" said Harry. "It is nothing but a mountain. There is not even a sign of a wash about it. It is all covered with great rough stones which look as though they had been thrown out of some volcano or dropped there from heaven, and never been disturbed."

"Exactly," said the professor. "They were thrown out of a volcano, but as molten lava, which upon cooling assumed the very form you describe. There is plenty of wash inside, as you will see when I have pierced the rim!"

"But how could a river run upon the top of a mountain?" asked another contemptuously—one who had just arrived and had not heard all of the Professor's address.

The professor answered with some impatience: "Examine ever so superficially the summit of the tableland and then the character of the surrounding country, and you can answer your own question. The surface of the lava flow is hard and comparatively indestructible. There is scarcely a trace of erosion throughout its entire extent. Nature, when she filled the channel, sealed it, and ordained the changes which you now behold. Look at the slates that surround us," and here the Professor picked a handful of decomposed talcose and crumpled it between his hands. "As I crush this, Nature by her countless forces—forces which never cease their labor, night or day, winter or summer—Nature, I say, has disintegrated these friable surroundings until they have been eroded to the depth of thousands of feet, leaving yonder magnificent crest as a monument of her work; barren, to all appearance, but in reality covered with inscriptions, not engraven in any modern tongue, it is true, but nevertheless a leaf of 'The Great Stone Book,' inscribed in the hand-writing of the Creator himself—a writing which they who approach Him with reverence and patient study, and the worship of truth and prayer, may sometimes be permitted to interpret."

"But what makes you choose that place?" said practical Captain Paine, who had now joined us, listening intently but continuing to stand, for he was never seen to sit or lie down except at meals and when he turned in for the night.

"Because that indentation which you see," pointing to the green spot, "is just so much off the rim—so much less tunnelling to do. The rim rock is low and thin there, I am sure—low, because I have traced a drift from the inner channel over the top of it, and thin because I have taken all the bearings and know that it cannot be very far through to the channel at that point."

"You have been here before, then, Professor?" said the Captain.

"Oh, yes. I spent six months examining the table-land, and I was a month camped on that spot. When I had resolved that was the place where I could attack it to the best advantage, I returned to the bay for my traps and here I am with them—or a portion of them at least—for the bulk are coming by the main road."

At 3 o'clock, there being plenty of willing hands, we made short work with the old gentleman's pack. Upon leaving he lifted his hat in a stately way, which all present returned with a will, wishing him good luck, but pitying him from the very bottom of our souls. At supper time the whole camp was talking about him, some of them mimicking the care with which he pronounced his name—Doctor Cresc-i-e, Doctor Cr-r-rescie, and so on—which was soon corrupted, of course, into Doctor Crazy; and Doctor Crazy, the Crazy Doctor, or the Crazy Professor, it was from that time forward, not only on the bar, but up and down the river and far and wide, as the story got out.

"That old gent un poco loco," said one of the Italians, grinning to Harry and me as he passed. Portugee Jake took it up, and I thought at one time there would be a fight over it; but Portuguese and Italians make a good deal of noise and a great many alarming gestures which don't mean fight always. Notwithstanding Jake's championship, however, it soon became understood in camp and on the river that the Professor was a little flighty.

"He's as crazy as a loon," said Harry to me, talking the matter over, as we often did, between us.

"Yes," I replied, "there can be no doubt of it; but it must be monomania, I think; he appears to be perfectly reasonable on all other subjects."

However, we heard nothing more of the Professor for a long time, and had almost forgotten him, when an accident occurred which brought him to our recollection and renewed the acquaintance. We had in our company a Swede named John Spencer, a tall, power-

ful fellow, and one of the greatest workers in the camp. He was a sailor, and had been second mate, I think, of a full-rigged ship. He was very high-tempered, or perhaps I should say choleric, for he was not at all quarrelsome; but when he got angry, he used to show it in a very funny fashion—by working like a perfect fury. In one of these tantrums he would slash around with pick or bar or sledge—whatever he might be working with—as though possessed by a devil. These fits would rarely last more than a quarter-of-an-hour or so —no doubt the tremendous muscular exertion worked them off. They were succeeded by a sulk, which, if no one interfered, was also of short duration. The boys used to laugh among themselves at Spencer's fits, but nobody cared to cross him in these moods, partly because it would have been very dangerous, but still more because he was such a good fellow and such a lion at his work. One day John was at his work in the race beneath some very heavy rocks, when he became possessed by one of these furies and started in to "tearing things." He slashed around like a perfect lunatic, and, I think, must have been nearly unconscious of what he was doing. The next moment one of the giant boulders and a part of the bank had fallen upon him, and he lay white and crushed, bleeding and groaning, beneath them. It seemed but a few moments before every man on the bar was at the spot; still, but two or three of us could work at a time to uncover him. One of the boulders was so wedged across his body that it seemed he must certainly die before he could be extricated.

"Somebody go to Jim Town for a doctor," said Captain Paine.

But just then I remembered our Professor. Was he not a doctor? He had said he was. Time was precious. We could hardly get a doctor over from Jim Town before the next day. So, after a moment's consideration, the captain said:

"Yes; better get the old doctor, if he is crazy. It's the best we can do."

I think I made the best time I ever made in my life

over to the old man's place, and he didn't lose a moment either. I was surprised to see the old gentleman's activity. They were just packing poor Spencer on a litter up to his shanty, when we reached the bar. From that moment the Professor ordered everything. He was perfectly cool and quiet, and for some reason everybody speedily became convinced that he knew exactly what he was about, and that if there was any chance for poor John, he would get the benefit of it. Almost quicker than I can write it the carpenter, acting under the Professor's instructions, had extemporized some sort of a cot, which appeared to hold the shattered frame as easily as it could be held, and the doctor, having first revived his patient by some stimulant, proceeded to examine and ascertain the full extent of his injuries, touching him with a light hand and wearing a serious, sympathetic face. Poor John, now white as a sheet and already but the ghost of himself, kept his eyes fixed on him, meanwhile, as if seeking to learn his fate from the doctor's countenance. Then came the setting and splintering of the broken bones, during which the poor fellow fainted, but was speedily restored.

"Well, doctor, are there any chances for him?" we asked, after it was all over.

"Oh, yes," he replied, "unless he has received some internal injuries, which do not at present appear, he will get over it with good care and nursing, although he is badly broken up. But he is a strong man, has led a temperate life, I should judge, and he has plenty of stamina to bring him through."

The Professor came down every day for awhile to look after his patient, who was soon crawling around under his care. This of course established the Professor's reputation as a medical man, but as he seemed crazier than ever on his Table Mountain scheme and persisted in talking about his "ancient river," with the conviction of one who had been inside of it and seen it, we became convinced that he was really demented, at least on that particular subject, and pitied him the more because of his talent and learning.

When the time came that his services were no longer necessary, John wanted to pay him, of course, but he would not take a dollar. "No, gentlemen," he said, "I remember—I shall always remember—your kind reception of the tired stranger, and except for poor John's sake, I am rejoiced at this opportunity of showing my appreciation of it."

But we were not of the sort to be put off in that way. We knew that the old man must be very poor, burying every cent he had in that barren, God-forsaken mountain. So we made up a little purse—Spencer gave four ounces of dust. This we spread on a tray, which we passed round to the boys. Each pulled out his leather purse, and added a pinch, until we had a little over eight ounces, which Harry and I undertook to deliver to the professor, and prevail on him to accept the next Sunday morning.

We were very glad of the chance to visit him. He had invited us several times, it is true, but he might have thought that we went to spy out and laugh at his folly; whereas, on the present occasion, he could put no such interpretation upon our visit. We anticipated considerable difficulty in prevailing upon him to accept the purse, but we resolved to try it. At the worst, we would leave it somewhere where he would be sure to find it.

It was now in the fall. The professor had been at work several months; but we were not prepared to see such extensive improvements or anything on so systematic a plan. Our pity and regret increased as we saw the evidences of a really considerable expenditure, evidently destined, from the scale on which the work was begun, to continue several years.

"This is a craze with a vengeance," said Harry. "What can have possessed the poor old fellow?"

There was already quite a considerable dump at the mouth of the tunnel, a good track, well-made cars, the mouth of the tunnel well faced up and neatly timbered, several frame buildings, the lumber for which must have been packed over from Jim Town, a blacksmith

and carpenter's shop, several acres of land under fence, and an air of prosperity which was very painful to see, knowing how it must all end.

We found the professor in his accustomed suit of rusty black, not omitting the "stove-pipe." He was very glad to see us, for we were favorites, evidently. He showed us around the place with manifest pride, though the more we saw, the more we were surprised, and the more sorry we felt for him.

At his "office" he showed us a topographical chart of the vicinity, made from his own surveys; a plan of the tunnel, with the course of the "ancient river" laid down; a plan of the building, fences, improvements, etc., all in regular form. There, too, he kept his surveying instruments, and on a table in the centre of the room were a number of maps, some shells, some minerals looking like petrifactions, which I took to be fossil remains, and so on. At a desk in a corner were his books, accounts, letters, some official-looking papers, and adjoining, a press for taking copies of his correspondence, all in perfect order as in any real concern. He had four hands constantly employed, besides two or three mechanics, three Danes and a Norwegian. He was going to increase his force shortly, he said.

We visited the tunnel, both of us feeling as though parties to a fraud. He had made great headway at first, but now the work was in the hardest kind of rock and progress was not more than a foot a week. This did not appear to discourage the Professor at all; on the contrary, he struck the rock, making the sparks fly, and appeared to derive great satisfaction from its adamantine character—discoursing the while learnedly upon the nature of the formation, the shape and characteristics of the "rim," and of the scoriaceous rock outside. Harry and I both felt anxious to dispel the fatal hallucination, but knew that it would be too cruel to do so. Besides, he was so scientific, and we had nothing but our sound common sense to offset his science. And how can one prove his point when opposed by arguments too learned for his comprehension?

"If he would only drop his high science," said Harry, "we could perhaps get a little common sense into him."

But the "laboratory," chemicals, collection of minerals, etc., overcame Harry a little, as they did me, so we proceeded to the business of our visit. But the Professor would not even look at our money.

"No! No!" he said. "No! No! not from any of you gentlemen; not on any account."

I tried him on several different tacks, but all without success, until at last I said, feeling very cheap as I said it: "Well, Doctor, you may perhaps feel glad of even this little money before you break through the rim and into the ancient channel. This is a great undertaking, and a costly enterprise for limited means."

The Professor's countenance changed, and his eyes fastened upon the purse. I had touched the right chord, evidently, and I followed up my advantage.

"You see, Doctor," I continued, "it may take only a year or two, or it may take three or four years. That rock is very hard. As you have so kindly explained to us, it has survived the disintegration of all other rocks. A foot a week is slow progress, and you would feel it very much if you were compelled to stop for want of means just as you were in sight of the reward of all your labor. Take it, and get more if you need it."

Here I caught Harry looking at me with undisguised admiration of my diplomacy or duplicity; which shall I call it? It was a new character for me to appear in, and to tell the truth, I was a little surprised at myself—still more at my success, for the Professor fell into the trap like the innocent lamb I knew him to be.

"You are right," said the Doctor suddenly, "quite right, and it is very kind and gracious of you to put it in that way. I am reminded that I can take the money now and send it back to your friend, as you suggest, after I have entered upon the ancient channel. With that understanding I will receive it. I thank you very much indeed."

We then visited "the ranch," as the professor called it. I have mentioned there was a spring at this spot.

The doctor explained that it seeped through from the buried river—"probably through some crevice occasioned by shrinkage in the rim rock after being superheated." A little below the mouth of the tunnel it disappeared, but there was a patch of several acres of black soil there, which was constantly moist, even upon the surface during the driest summer. This the Doctor said he was going to plant the following season in watermelons, muskmelons, tomatoes, etc., and on the higher land surrounding it, fruit trees, such as peaches, apricots, nectarines and figs, and on the stony land, grapes.

These were almost the first agricultural plants which we had heard of in the mines, at least on so extensive a scale, and they seemed to us nearly as novel and visionary as the ancient channel itself.

"The old fellow must be going to settle down for life," said Harry laughing, "and under the shadow of his own vine and fig-tree."

After this we didn't see much of the Professor for many months; but we heard of him from time to time on the river—at Jim Town and the vicinity. His cure of Spencer became known, and his services as a physician were soon in considerable request. He had either wonderfully good luck or uncommon skill, for he cured every patient and inspired universal confidence, which made his one crazy point the more conspicuous and painful, of course. He never appeared to trouble himself about a fee. If the patient was poor, he not only gave his services but furnished medicines, refusing all remuneration; if rich, "Pay me what you think you can afford," he would say. So soon as it became generally known that he waited on rich and poor alike; that he would make any journey in any weather—during the rainstorms wrapped in an old, half-military cloak, but the rusty suit and the stove-pipe never failing to appear at the critical moment—and that he was "so crazy kind" as one poor fellow put it; then some of those who could afford to pay paid him more liberally; and I doubt, after all, if he lost anything by his

generosity, for everybody wanted to do the old gentleman a good turn, and when that is the case almost everybody succeeds in doing it, sooner or later.

It was soon discovered that he was mighty tight at a bargain. He paid cash for everything—lumber, provisions, hardware, and so on; for, of course, nobody would have liked to trust him as they did us, who were a rich company with a sure thing. Every one knew that the old fellow must break up on his tunnel, sooner or later; and the most inconsiderate felt a sort of pity to see good money going into the barren mountain, and so clever and learned a gentleman under such a delusion. The storekeepers' sympathy took the form of letting him have things at quite a discount—for cash, of course—and the boys generally knew perfectly well what it meant when the Professor paid only twenty-five dollars for a barrel of flour when we paid thirty, and so on. In fact he became quite a privileged character, until everybody around the country, far and wide, was glad to see "the old stove-pipe" put in an appearance.

Still he did not altogether escape ridicule. There was a wild lot of boys about in those days, and what they deemed a little bit of harmless fun with the old Professor was very dear to them. But they soon found that he was very sensitive, especially upon scientific subjects and his pet delusion; so he no sooner began to bristle up and stand on his dignity than they would knock off their devilment and make it up with the Professor, who was as easily reconciled as a lovable, high-spirited child. One day, a lot of our boys riding for a *paseo* up to his ranch met the old gentleman on the road, busy with a pocket-microscope, prone upon the ground, prying into some insignificant spots or stains almost invisible to the eyesight of the ordinary observer. He certainly did look ridiculous, with the rusty black suit dust-covered and soiled, the coarse, ungainly shoes, an ancient high black stock or cravat, and the memorable stove-pipe tilted on to the back of his head to afford greater facility for the use of the instrument.

The boys set up a shout as soon as they saw him,

which was unmistakably a shout of derision, and then surrounded him and began to tease and chaff.

"What have ye got there, old man?" said one; "prospecting for diamonds?"

"No, no—he's prospecting for the ancient channel," said another. "Have you broke through the rim yet, Professor?"

"I can't understand why you miners—you men of muscle—make so little of science," said the Doctor, straightening himself up, coloring, and standing on his dignity, with the stove-pipe still tilted back and shaking the pocket-microscope at his tormentors, as he warmed to his subject. "If you meet a poor plodding savant on the road, breaking his bits of rocks, scraping together his little harvest of weeds, or busy with his lens among the larvæ of insects, if you do not laugh at and deride him, you at least treat him as one demented, as a silly addle-pate, or an imbecile. Yet may that forlorn enthusiast with his microscope perhaps stop the ravages of some insect pest which has caused more disaster to humanity than flood, fire, famine, pestilence, or even war itself. Yes," said the Professor, looking even dignified as he became more earnest, "in the knapsack of some such 'crazy pedant' may lie a secret which shall pay tenfold the national debt of the greatest nation on earth. You men measure achievement by the pound—or rather by the ounce troy," he added bitterly, "and believe in nothing that has not some element of brute force in it. Yet I tell you that these little bits of glass, probing secrets of nature apparently too insignificant—yes, in reality, too diminutive—for mortal vision, may achieve more for humanity, more to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and enrich the world, than all the mighty forces which man has conquered, or even than the mightier forces which the telescope has made palpable to our senses. Yes, yes," said the Professor, half musing and more to himself than to us, "the infinitely little is of far more importance to man than the infinitely great; and if this indicates our true place in the scale of creation and the universe, let us ac-

cept it with reverence and humility, and lay to heart the lesson which it unmistakably teaches"—and with that he gathered up his traps and shuffled off, shaking his microscope menacingly at us, and still muttering to himself.

Meanwhile our own affairs had not been going prosperously. We found digging the race much more of an undertaking than we had contemplated. We had not neglected the precaution of sinking two or three shafts to prove the bar at this point, and had found no sign of bed-rock, nothing but sand and gravel. But when we came to sink the race along its entire length, we found ridges or "backs" of very hard rock cropping up in several places, and these so delayed the work, despite our utmost endeavors, that we were obliged to abandon all hope of getting into the river that season. As this became apparent, we slacked up our efforts and took things a little easier.

The winter of '52–'53 which followed was one of exceptional severity. It will long be remembered by those who were in the mines at that time, and whose fortunes were perhaps dependent on it. It was not that we were exposed, for the race was finished and there was no necessity for working out in the storms, but as the river rose to such an unusual height and the snows accumulated in the mountains, we realized what it all would mean when they began to melt and we were called upon to dam the river and turn it into our race. But there was no help for it. It was one of those chances which all river miners have to take. The chapter of accidents in all mining is a long and painful one, for if it is not one thing, it is another. So we kept up our courage, but the boys were not as cheerful as in '51. Our "dead sure thing" did not look so sure, or, at least, so near, and the home trail by way of Stockton appeared dimmer through the mist and haze, and the further end of it, at least, much more distant, though certainly our end of it could not have moved a peg.

By July of the following summer we had seen two of our dams swept away, and it became apparent that,

try our best, we could not bottom the "deep pool" that season either. So, you see, there were three summers gone. In '52 we could have waded across the river, it was so low that fall, but we couldn't get the race down if our lives had depended on it. In '53, when we had everything ready, there seemed to be a dozen rivers in that channel. The force of the water was so great that it swept away our dams like a bundle of chips. So there was nothing for it but to wait over till another year. We were obliged to pay many of our bills out of our now reduced purses, but the storekeepers were still good-natured and our credit fairly good. Nobody doubted but we would bottom the deep pool by the following summer, and be amply repaid for all our labor. We were most of us young and light-hearted, and the absolute certainty we felt of final success kept up our spirits better than might have been expected.

During the summer of '53 we had plenty of leisure, and many of us liked to spend our Sundays up at the Professor's tunnel. It had become widely known by this time as "The Old Stove-pipe Tunnel," although it was alluded to variously as "The Professor's Folly," "The Doctor's Craze," and so on. But whatever might be the barrenness of the inside of the mountain, the Professor had certainly made the ranch profitable enough. Such watermelons! such muskmelons! I never saw before or since; and melons were melons in those days, I can assure you. Nobody grudged giving a dollar, or even a dollar-and-a-half, for a good-sized melon—and there were none but good-sized ones in the Doctor's patch. He had walled up a fine, cool spring in the middle of the garden, over which was a latticed shelter covered with grape-vines. This spring he kept filled with melons, and they cut open as though they had been iced inside and out. He kept several cows and lots of fowls, and had, therefore, an abundance of milk, fresh butter, and eggs. Everything outside had prospered—the fruit trees were all strong and healthy, the vines luxuriant. All the miners on the river might have been turned into the tomato or melon patch with-

out making much impression upon them. There was a fine field of barley on the hillside and another of alfalfa. He had erected several additional buildings, barns, etc. Within sight of the house he had fenced in an extensive *potrero;* this he had sown in alfalfa, and here were twenty or thirty mustangs, which the boys used to hire to ride over to Jim Town or Sonora, and several good, strong, American work-animals for use on the ranch. The laboratory was enlarged, and a drug store and small pharmaceutical department added to it.

To a party of healthy, hardy miners, hungry for a bite of something green, and a glimpse of rural surroundings, the place appeared as an oasis in the desert. The old fellow always made it a point to set a splendid dinner every Saturday and Sunday of fresh meat, vegetables, ham and eggs, chicken, cakes, cream, cheese, salad, lots of milk, watermelons, muskmelons, etc. So the "Old Stove Pipe Ranch" came to be a place of resort for the miners all along the river, and even occasionally from Jim Town and the vicinity. Every Sunday all through the summer you could see a string of horses tied under a shade-tree, or alongside the old gentleman's barn, or perhaps turned into the *potrero;* and at dinner time a long row of bronzed and bearded faces, stowing away the good things which none of us had expected to see in those parts. At a dollar a head for meals, which nobody grudged; a dollar apiece for melons, five dollars a day for a mustang, the Professor would have made a good thing of it if it had not all been buried or spent upon that stony, barren, God-forsaken old Table Mountain. By this time the boys used to tease the old gentleman about it a good deal, but he had schooled himself to take it all in good part; he kept it up always about the "ancient channel," as though he had been there and was going back again.

He never lost his regard for Harry and me, so, seeing that he liked us so much, we used to ride over to the ranch on a Saturday as often as possible, to stay over all night and next day. On Saturdays we would always find the Professor at work, and I tell you he could work.

He labored a great deal in the blacksmith shop; there the old black coat came off and he wore a pair of suspenders outside, over a dark blue shirt. But he never let go the stovepipe, and, like a sea-captain's hat, it would never move of itself. He sharpened all his own drills, and he gave our blacksmith many a point that was new to him—as he could give almost any mechanic in any trade.

Of course, he came to exercise a great influence over some of the simple miners on the river; and our "Portugee Jake" conceived such a reverence for him that he would have followed him around like a dog, I believe, if the Professor would have let him. This dated from the doctoring of poor John Spencer; for Jake declared that, when the Professor's fingers passed over the crushed form of the wounded man, "they felt outside and saw inside." This meant, of course, that the Doctor's long, sensitive digits appeared to act as separate and individual intelligences. They so appeared to me, but Jake, in his dumb way, failed to express himself, or, at least, to make his meaning clear. And this influence the Professor always turned to good account, just as he caught our men the day of his arrival, when he slipped the grace and blessing on them while they were standing out of respect to him as a stranger and a guest. The boys all liked a little whiskey on Sundays and holidays, and while there were certainly one or two who would take it to excess, the rest never cared for more than a horn at meal-times. All knew that the Doctor had a little of first quality among his medicines, and they often tried to coax it out of him, but it was of no use; and so soon as they learned to know that he really meant what he said, they gave up trying and forgot all about the liquor. "No, gentlemen," the Doctor would say, "there is nothing here for you but what is good for both your bodies and your souls." To get in on the latter, I suppose, he used to give some kind of a Sunday afternoon lecture, after the place came to be so much frequented, and in these he so sweetened his pills that the boys didn't know they were taking

them. I did hear over in Jim Town that he had been not only a doctor of medicine, but a doctor of philosophy and a doctor of divinity as well; but if he really had been a parson, he was wise to conceal it, for if the boys had entertained the most remote suspicion of a sermon, not a man on that river would have gone within a mile of "The Old Stove-Pipe Ranch." But he came to be considered the most learned man that had ever entered that part of the country, and in the end, in his quiet way, really succeeded in doctoring our souls a good deal, as well as our bodies.

Harry and I never tired of admiring that melon-patch, and I think we liked it better than all the philosophy. "I never saw such a patch, even in Virginia," said Harry to the Doctor one day. "What do you do to them, Professor, to make them thrive in that way?"

"He knew all about them bugs," said Jake, blowing the Professor's trumpet as usual.

The Professor laughed. "There is something in knowing about the bugs, of course, and Jake is right so far, but I will tell you: it consists, I think, in a very simple matter. It is well known that wheat, for example, reaches its greatest degree of productiveness at the northern limit of its habitat, if I may use the term. This I translate to mean that the long winter followed by the warm, moist spring and fervid summer force the growth from birth to maturity in the most rapid possible manner, and literally without a check. I think these are the conditions of the most prolific abundance in all growth. I do not mean to imply that all vegetation produces most abundantly at the northern limit of production, but under those conditions most favorable to its growth and development without interruption, and this, of course, is more particularly the case with plants of extremely rapid natural growth. Check one of these vines, for example, if never so slightly, and it will instantly dwindle, and remain a pigmy among its fellows. I watch them, therefore, during their infancy with a great deal of care. A very slight protection from excessive heat, cold, or moisture is sufficient.

Then the hills are so prepared as to force the most rapid possible development. As to the insect pest, that is a pet subject of mine; I have a theory that the only effective remedy is to be found in the propagation of their natural enemies. It is a difficult subject, I grant, and belongs more particularly to entomology than agriculture; but it will be found eventually, I am confident, that every insect has its natural enemies, as have nearly all other creations in Nature. The beetle, or bug, as Jake calls it, which feeds on these vines has several, as I have already discovered, some of which attack the eggs and others the insect in a later stage of development. My experiments are as yet, of course, very imperfect. Life itself," said the Doctor, with a sigh, "only permits us to make a beginning—or at best one step, perhaps, beyond our neighbor—one little notch added to the record. These pests—pests of this character, I mean—are so immensely productive that the destroyer cannot make great headway; but I find the insect soon obtains some consciousness of the presence of its natural enemy, for it soon abandons the vicinity and seeks to flourish unmolested elsewhere."

I know nothing about these scientific subjects. The Professor was full of "pet theories," and doubtless would catch me tripping in my science and correct me, if alive, and he had the opportunity of doing so; but I have striven to remember his language as well as to describe his appearance, manners, and costume. But I must hasten to the close of my story.

It was late in the summer of '54 when the Cosmopolitan Company finally succeeded, after immense exertions, in bottoming the deepest part of the deep pool on "Shorty's Bar." I remember the day well; I shall never forget it. I was considered an expert in working up the bed-rock, into which, if open-grained and suitable, even the finest of the fine river gold penetrates wonderfully. We had sunk in two or three places, having a "sump hole" in each and a pump worked by an over-shot wheel from the race. I got down first, and, to my consternation, found a bed-rock as smooth as

a billiard ball, as hard as steel, and with as little grain. There was just a slight hope, a bare possibility, that it might be only a spot; but that hope vanished as we bottomed it in several places elsewhere and found it all of the same character. The "deep pool" which was to have given us all "our pile," for which we had worked going on four years, and which everybody had considered "a dead sure thing," proved to be—perfectly barren! The force of the stream, an eddy, or something, had swept it as clean and polished as a cylinder-head or a mahogany dining-table.

There were quite a lot of us standing, looking disconsolate at this wreck of all our hopes, when our attention was attracted to Portugee Jake who was going through a lot of antics like a clown at a Christmas pantomime. He was a queer-looking character anyway, with his shock of black curly hair standing out from the sides of his head as though stuffed, and with an odd cap something like a colored nightcap perched on top. He used to talk as much with his hands and arms as with his mouth, and that was not a little if he was at all excited. Well, there he was, gesticulating like a lunatic, holding up his hands, shouting, showing first three long, snaky, supple fingers, then four, then five, then actually dancing with excitement, and trying to talk with his legs as well as with all the rest of his body.

We were too far away to hear what he said, or to catch his meaning, but we saw it must be something out of the common by the effect it had on the boys who heard it, as they were not in the habit of paying much attention to Jake's talk. Presently Captain Paine, who was in the hole with me, had his curiosity awakened, and beckoned to Jake, who came over to the bank above us and went through the same performance. We couldn't hear very well on account of the noise of the water in the race, the dripping of the pumps, and the squeaking of the over-shot wheel; but what we did hear, making every allowance for Jake's excitement and probable exaggeration, was a staggerer, sure enough.

"Professor strike it big!" screamed Jake, jumping like a monkey.

"Struck what?" shouted Captain Paine through his hands.

"Gold," screamed Jake once more. "Buckets full"—going through the motion of pouring out a bucket—"six, eight, ten pounds yesterday!" holding out his fingers, then both hands with the fingers spread out like the spokes of a wheel. Then he took out a tin box and rattled it, shouting: "John Spencer's money. Professor pay—one pound Old Stove-Pipe gold"—rattling it above his head like one possessed. "Buckets full—buckets full. Oh, my God!" and then began to tell the story over again to others attracted by his gesticulations.

Captain Paine and I stared at one another, fairly struck dumb and immovable by the news. We knew that Jake had been off up the tunnel for a day or two, hanging around the Professor, as he did whenever he could get the chance. Jake was as near crazed by the news as could be, but he knew gold when he saw it, and could estimate its quality and quantity as well as any of us. No ordinary strike would have set him so completely demented.

"Well," said Captain Paine after a while, "well, boys, that's just our luck. Here's our 'dead sure thing' all washed out, and that crazy old fool has struck it up there in the moon! I'll never strike another lick at mining as long as I live," and he threw down a steel bar which he held in his hand with a force that made it rattle and sing upon the hard, smooth rock. I believe he was as good as his word; for so soon as we could get settled up he left, for the East. I think he could have stood our failure, but the Professor's wonderful success coming right on top of it rather turned him inside out.

When the Captain threw down the bar, we all made for the camp to look at the Professor's gold, which he had sent to pay John back his fee. There is a good deal of character in gold, as every placer-miner knows.

I think I have seen "dust" from nearly every camp from Mariposa to Siskiyou, but I never saw the like of that. It looked bewitched. It was coarse, smooth, washed, wrinkled, burned, stained, and what not. Some of it looked like nothing so much as a lot of used-up old coins, worn smooth to defacement by some extinct and forgotten race, yet with illegible inscriptions which we could not help studying to decipher, although we knew, of course, that nature, not man, had so inscribed them. And the impression was—the conviction, I might say—that there remained plenty more where that came from.

We were a very solemn crowd. Nobody had much to say about it, strange to tell, but we spread the gold out on a tray on the old mess-table and made a tolerably fair division of it, every man of us taking a little, for the Doctor had sent us an even pound troy. One little piece, about the size and shape of a Chilian *medio*, I wear on my watch-guard to this day. After this most of the boys dropped off, one by one, until only Harry and I were left. We found a little crevice in the bed of the stream, a few feet wide only, which proved quite rich; and working it up patiently, we made out nearly as well, perhaps, after all, as though we had struck the "dead sure thing," and had forty to divide it among. But the Professor made an enormous pile, for Jake's description, brilliant as it was, fell short of the truth. By a wonderful stroke of luck the tunnel had been driven just level with the bottom of the "ancient channel." There had been a fall in the river near that spot, the Doctor explained, for on drifting up stream he found the ledge rising like a wall; and it must have been narrow at that point, for they soon struck the rim on the opposite side. But it had acted just like a riffle, as the Professor showed us, making a drawing for the purpose. The stream had poured over with a rush, leaving the heaviest of the gold to settle undisturbed upon that narrow ledge.

One Sunday, late in the fall, Harry and I went up to the ranch as usual. The Professor had gone, the

Swedes told us; sold out to them and gone home! He had left in the night, concealing his departure for fear of robbery, for though he had sent down sacks of gold every week by stage, he still had considerable with him, besides certificates of deposit, and other valuable papers. We found also a note from the Doctor bidding us a most kind adieu, but leaving no clew whatever to his destination.

"Did you ever see such right down crazy fool's luck?" said Harry to me, "to come right up here—thousands of feet—nearly to the top of the mountain! What could have possessed the old man? But he must have made a tremendous clean-up, what with his doctoring, his ranch, his horses to hire, his tight bargains, and at last the sale of his place, he must have done pretty well for a crazy man."

"But perhaps he wasn't crazy after all—perhaps he knew," said the Swede, looking at us in his calm, open-eyed, simple way.

What do you think about it?

This touching incident is related by Jacques Normand, and has been translated for ROMANCE by Harriet L. B. Porter.

BETSY'S LITTLE SLIPPERS.

I WAS travelling in Ireland with some friends. We were in the south-eastern part of the island and were traversing Connemara, the poorest part of that poor country. If anything can give a horrible impression of drought and misery, it certainly is Connemara.

A profound dolor seems to rest upon that corner of the earth. Low plains destitute of verdure extend at the right to a chain of mountains, which are bare, as though they had been ravaged by fire. These immense spaces are without a village, often without even a single dwelling.

The few which we pass at long intervals consist only of four stone walls piled up without cement, and with a black roof. From the back of these dreary cabins issues a thin thread of blue smoke.

In front of them one sees children, from five to twelve years old, with naked feet, sun-scorched skins and ragged clothing. They utter uncouth sounds in a language which is partly Irish, partly English. They usually run after the carriage for several miles. With a supplicating hand they extend to you some sort of rude merchandise; it may be roughly-hewn wooden shoes; it may be woolen stockings; it may be a little bunch of flowers, plucked from the mountain-side. They run shouting, hurrying, hustling each other.

"Penny, please! penny, please!" they repeat over and over. A penny is finally cast to them.

Immediately there is brawling, struggling, and fist-pounding. The conqueror deserts the ranks of our followers, but the others still pursue the carriage. One by one the small flock drop away. First the youngest become exhausted and stop. At last there are only three—then two—then only one, who, in his

turn, rolls in the dust raised by the wheels, uttering a last "Penny, please!" with labored and panting breath.

About eleven o'clock we arrived at Ougtherard, near Lake Correb. This lake is said to contain as many islands and also as many inhabitants as there are days in the year. Here we should breakfast.

For a long time a little girl of about twelve followed our carriage. She alone had persisted of five or six children, the rest of whom had dropped away as we passed along. Tall and slender for her age, she had a charming face of the true Irish type of beauty. Her complexion was darkly browned, and she had large blue eyes. Her long run had put roses into her cheeks; her parted lips showed her brilliant teeth. A ragged brown linen waist and skirt composed her costume. Her naked feet, which were remarkably small and pretty, seemed to fly through the dust. Poor little one! Our hearts ached to look at her!

Suddenly she uttered a cry, extended her arms, and fell forward. We stopped the carriage, but fortunately nothing serious had befallen her. A projecting stone had slightly cut her foot, which bled a little. We asked her who she was and from whence she came. She called herself "Betsy," and said that she lived at Ougtherard. We told her to climb into the carriage, and we would carry her to her home. She looked at us in bewilderment, as though she could not understand what we were saying. We repeated our offer. She blushed with pleasure, and gave us a look, which, although full of inquiry and wonder, was yet most grateful. She seemed to be overjoyed at riding in a carriage. It was her first experience of that kind.

Ten minutes later we were in Ougtherard, a poor village of forty houses. We gave two shillings to the child as a parting present. She looked at it as though she could not believe her eyes. It occurred to me that the wound in her foot might be inflamed by a walk in the dust. I therefore entered a shoe-maker's shop, the only one the place afforded, and bought a pair of slippers for the poor child.

Betsy watched this operation in profound perplexity. When I extended the slippers toward her, saying they were for her, she was dumfounded, intoxicated, dazzled. She dared not take them.

Finally, as I firmly insisted that the slippers were for her and her alone she seized them and fled with a bound of joy and without even saying, "Thank you!"

"Little savage!" thought I, "she does not even know how to thank anybody."

I rejoined my companions, who were already seated around the hotel dining-table, and we had soon finished our breakfast, and were about to climb into our carriage, when I felt a little hand within mine which sought to detain me.

"Come, sir!" she said, "come!"

"And where do you wish to lead me?"

"To our house. It is very near."

I followed her. My companions were not a little puzzled. She led me to the bottom of a narrow street. There we paused before a humble cottage. She pushed the door open, and we entered. The interior consisted of a single room. It was without a floor, and contained scarcely any furniture. It was dimly lighted by the feeble rays which entered through a paper-covered window, near which sat an old woman spinning. She was Betsy's grandmother. At our entrance, three little black pigs scampered under her bench, grunting. In the corner stood the lowly bed of the grandmother; at its side the little cot of the child. Just above her pillow Betsy showed me a kind of rough staging leaning against the wall. Upon the middle board, covered with a very white linen cloth, beneath an image of St. Patrick, and between two bunches of white flowers, I perceived—the little slippers!

The poor child looked at her shrine of beauty with admiration, and even with religious awe, as upon a precious relic.

"But you should put the slippers on your feet. They are for you to wear," said I. I could not help laughing to see them set up as sacred objects of devotion.

She appeared astonished, almost angry. "Oh, never!" she said earnestly. "They are too beautiful!"

We slipped some money into the pocket of the old grandma, and bade adieu to Betsy; but she could not bear to leave us yet, and followed us quite to the carriage and looked after it with eyes full of tears as long as it could be seen.

. . . . . .

A month later, we passed through the same place on our return trip, and made a halt there as before. We did not see Betsy. Before quitting that country, to which I never expected to return, I wished to see her again, if only for a minute.

I sought out and knocked at the door of the poor little cabin.

No one opened it.

I lifted the rude latch and entered.

A sad spectacle presented itself to my eyes. Around the little bed of Betsy, lighted by three smoking candles, some old women were kneeling and reciting prayers in a monotonous voice. Upon my entrance, the chant stopped, and one of the old women arose and came to me. It was the grandmother. She recognized me immediately, and two large tears ran over her wrinkled cheeks.

"Betsy," murmured I, "where is Betsy?"

In a few broken words she explained to me that Betsy had taken a fever, and had just died.

I approached the cot. The pale face of the child wore a peaceful expression. Her long black hair lay over her shoulders in heavy curls, but her beautiful bright eyes were shut. Clasped in her thin, blue-veined hands, and pressed closely to her heart, were the image of St. Patrick and the two little slippers. During all the time she had been sick, the old dame told me, she had held them in her hands. I begged the old woman to bury them with her.

A tear came to my eyes. I leaned over the poor Irish child and imprinted a kiss upon her forehead.

Here is a Thanksgiving story by Harriet Prescott Spofford. It originally appeared in the *Home-Maker*, and is designed for the benefit of the frivolous and worldly-minded.

TRIFLES LIGHT AS AIR.

THE snow came early that year, although it was never known to make much delay about spreading its wings over that high hill country. It was always unwelcome to Barbara Archer. It used to seem to her as though, if she had not really died, yet she was surrounded by a vast, viewless prison-wall which shut her out of life. She hated to be so withdrawn from the world as this winter on the mountain side made her; she loved the gay throng of the city, the occupations and idleness there, shopping, calling, dancing, theatres, music, candles, dress. She was a butterfly and loved the flowers of life.

Here there was absolutely no one but herself and the child and the servants, and, at night and morning, her husband. No one ever came in; there was no one to come in. There was not a house in sight but the shepherd's hut among the hills above; for the works and the houses of the men were at the foot of the range, and there was not even a hill-woman to come in for a good gossip—alas, there was no one to gossip about. And she wanted to live in the city; and she particularly wanted to go down and spend Thanksgiving there, and she had meant to do it, and had ordered some dresses from Radnor that she might go cap-a-pie and strike envy to the hearts of these, and terror to the hearts of those, and delight the eyes that loved her—and here was her husband stoutly refusing to go at all, and she was condemned to spend the day, when all her people would be merry-making together, here in this lodge in the wilderness; and she said, first to herself,

and then to every one within hearing, just how she hated it!

It didn't matter that this lodge was of the most luxurious; that the newspapers and magazines and new books came with regularity; that her splendid horses could take her and her boy, wrapped in furs to the chin, careering over the hills and through the snowy forest ways. She used to rave about scenery when she left town in the Summer; how her heart beat with joy at the sight of mountains with their purple hollows and sunlit steeps on the horizon, like things of a dream; at the plunging of any wild stretch of surf; at the long lanes of golden green light in the mossy dells of the woods. But now!

"Talk of scenery!" she cried. "One can be as satiated with that as with chocolates. Mountains? For my part, I would give all Cotopaxi with Chimborazo and Popocatapetl and Mount Helen thrown in, for one city alley and two brick walls!"

"Perhaps it *would* be the more valuable as an investment," said her husband. "But I always thought I should like to own Popocatapetl."

"What in the world would you do with it, Scott?"

"Tunnel it! And pipe off heat enough to warm all this north country."

"Well! If that isn't about as practical as our living up here in the wilderness!"

"Practical? There's nothing more so," said her husband, warming with the fancy, and laying down his fork. "When the work approached the central fires, have the ducts all laid, first with the infusible trap and lava rock at hand, and then with fire-clay, to finish up with regular piping; and all there would be left to do would be the final tapping—and pay for the whole out of the silver and gold found on the way, and after that, clear profit till the end of time! Warm every city, every hall, every house, in the whole north, and supply power to the machinery of a continent out of the earth's central fires! Good Heavens! Vanderbilt would be nowhere, the Rothschilds would be beggars in compari-

son to us. Buy up the British Islands for pasture-land! You should have a dress, the cloth covered with a diamond in every mesh, and the train reaching out into the other room—a comet pale beside you. It makes my hair stand on end to think of it!"

"It makes my blood run cold to hear you go on so! And it isn't a bit more chimerical than your work here, when you could have plenty of opportunity for your science and business capacity, and all that, in the city. It always seems to me as if you were extracting tin from old tomato-cans."

"Silver, you mean," said her husband, with unbroken good-nature. "Silver that makes you very comfortable to-day, and will establish a bank-account to make you more so to-morrow."

"It won't!" she cried. "I'd rather live in the narrowest street in town and go round with a tambourine, while you ground a hurdy-gurdy, than have all the bank accounts you'll ever get out of this, where we're wasting the best years of our life. I should at least see some human beings then!"

"The same sort of human beings that you see now with your house full of servants—eight servants to wait on three people," said Mr. Archer, setting down his cup and wiping his moustache. "And you wouldn't enjoy life in the city, my love, without a bank account, let me tell you. Your dresses, your flowers, your carriages, your opera box, your dinner parties——"

"I should enjoy anything better than I do this! This wilderness, this cemetery, this place after death! Look at the snow falling now!"

"Let me see. In this wilderness your millinery bills would support a common family. I don't see how you do it."

"How I do it? It's all the pleasure I have—opening the boxes!"

"One thousand? two thousand a year? Oh, I'm glad to have you have them, you know. You do them justice. I like to see you so."

"I'd like to have other people see me! I'd like to

see other people! I feel as if I were a rustic—a boor!"

"Nothing could ever make you that."

"Oh, don't talk so to me, Scott! If you thought so, you wouldn't keep me in prison up here."

"In prison with your husband, your child,—horses like those of Achilles?"

"For all that, dreary's no name for it. I can't see why you won't let Alex and me live in town, and you come and go."

"Come and go on a ten hours' journey? Of course, I couldn't do that every day, and I couldn't do it every other day. I couldn't do it at all, and see anything of you and Alexis. I should have to go on Saturday and content myself with the daylight of Sunday in the bosom of my family. It might make no odds to you, but it would to me; and so you see how impossible it is."

"I don't see that it is impossible."

"You flatter me," he said, trying to repress his vexation. "But——"

"But that is no reason why you can't go down for Thanksgiving."

"You can—you and Alexis."

"I don't want to go without you. It would look well, wouldn't it!"

"Oh! If looks are all!"

"They're not. I shouldn't be welcome without you. And I can't have people seeing that my husband is so wrapped up in his business that he can't spend a holiday with me."

"When *is* Thanksgiving?"

"You know very well. How absurd! It's to-morrow, of course."

"Well, I can't, then. It's no use," he said, "it *is* impossible. Things are too pressing. It's not to be thought of. But you needn't be so lonely. You can have all the guests you wish—fill the house——"

"I don't wish any," she said, with her prettiest pout; "I don't wish them to see my husband so lost in his

experiments and machinery that I might as well have no husband at all."

"I rather think you'd find the difference," he said, still imperturbably. "You don't know when you're well off, with a husband who loves you, and a boy—a boy that beats the Dutch! The little rogue—going to be a great chemist, Bab! You ought to have seen him in the laboratory yesterday——"

"I'm glad I didn't! I don't want him to go there! If I find him studying chemistry and mining and all that, I'll burn the books up! I'd rather he'd be a clerk at a ribbon-counter. I'm afraid every day he goes down with you, that he'll be brought home a mangled mass of flesh and sulphuric acid, and goodness knows what!"

"Great Heavens!" cried Mr. Archer, suddenly, springing to his feet, dropping his napkin, and upsetting his coffee. "What it is to have married a *fool!*"

And then Mr. Archer closed the door behind him, not to say emphatically.

Well, she didn't care if he did! That was a way to show how happy she ought to be. That was a way to make her happy. To let her see that her husband was perfectly indifferent to her wishes,—wanted to go his way, and expected her to go hers,—absorbed in his money-making,—able to understand none of her finer feelings,—laughed at her when she spoke of them,—just a mere brute! And so lashing herself up, at last the tears came; and she paused in the middle of a warm gush to look at herself in the mirror and see what an abused woman it must be whose husband made her Thanksgiving-Day so wretched; reduced her to tears at the breakfast-table,—and then, Justine came into the room and told her a box had arrived on the mountain team; and the tears disappeared by magic; and she ran up-stairs where Justine was already opening the box with as interested fingers as her own.

"Where's Master Alex?" asked Mrs. Archer. "He always likes to see me try on my new dresses."

"He's gone with the master," said Justine. "I saw his little nose in the furs as they drove down."

"Oh, then, Mr. Archer will come home in the middle of the day. He never keeps Alex down there long. Perhaps he'll relent about going, and push things, and take us down after all. Now just look at this—the idea of Radnor's sending me—I don't know—it's really quite novel—coming back to the old sweeping styles, aren't they? Peach bloom shot with silver. Humph!"

"It is perfection," said Justine.

"Mercy! It's moonshine, just mere moonshine! No character to it. I shall have to mass carnations on it. Or no—my topazes. Here, Justine, get out the silver paper. I meant this to wear to the Van Remsen's ball. I may as well try it on and see if it's all right—they never are. Perhaps he'll change his mind and will go down for Thanksgiving yet. I did want to dazzle Lucie de Peyster. Well, it will go hard with me, if I get there, but I'll manage to stay for Christmas and have a dash at New Year's. At any rate, I can see how I *should* look!"

And the hour that followed was so absorbing to Mrs. Archer that she quite forgot to look out of the window at the softly falling snow over the hills, or much of anywhere else but in the glass.

And if beauty is its own excuse for being, as we are told, she certainly had her own justification, for the wintry noon of a thick snowstorm never cast its pale light on anything lovelier than this little fairy creature in her peach-bloom with the collar and girdle and chatelaine of topazes, and the band of them in her chestnut hair, with the peach-bloom on her cheek as well, the topaz lustre in her eyes, and the smile that dimpled both corners of her rosy little mouth.

"It's a crying shame," she said, "if Scott still refuses to go after he sees me in this. Pretty sort of Thanksgiving it will be for me up here, with this dress in a box, and Lucie de Peyster's triumph hanging over me! There, Justine, you can put a bit of yellow point in here when I get it off, and add some loops—you'll find

the lace in the left hand drawer of the dressing-case in the bow-room. You don't mean to say that's the luncheon-bell!"

And then as Justine left the room, a great prancing and jingling was to be heard, a bursting open of the door in the rising wind, a stamping and shaking and exclaiming in the hall! and Mr. Archer came dashing up-stairs and into the room as she was just turning away from the mirror.

"Well, well, mamma!" he cried gaily. "I know you've forgiven me, or you'd never be looking like this fairy spectacle! Having a ball up here alone? Flocking all by yourself? What a scoundrel I was to speak to you so this morning, my little darling! I'm so glad you know I didn't mean anything. It has troubled me all the forenoon so that I could do no business at all, and I came home to make it all right with you, and tell you I'll give up everything and go down. We can take the six o'clock train in the morning, and your mother'll delay dinner if we telegraph. See what a little tyrant you are!" he said, throwing himself on the lounge. "You meant to go from the first. And you knew you would. And here's your dress ready!"

She had meant to be very haughty and reserved and distant when she saw Scott again. But the surprise and the pleasure of having him see her, and his infectious good nature, all overcame her intentions, and she had to look at him and laugh, and then run and throw her arms round him, and hide her happy, blushing face in his neck.

"Oh, what a child I am!" she cried, looking up. "I *am* a fool! You only said the truth. But being a fool, you know——"

"I am a brute!"

"That's just what I said you were!" and she hid her face again. "And as for you," she said, dancing off in a minute, "you like to see me look pretty.—Confess you do!"

"You always do, you little butterfly. You're lovelier to-day than you ever were. Come down to lunch-

eon in your new regimentals. Let me have the bloom of them, the peach-bloom. Come! come down just as you are, or I'll take you on my shoulders, you Hop o' my Thumb!"

"Hop o' my Thumb was a gentleman."

"Well, shall I carry you on the palm of my hand, or will you walk down beside me like a Christian gentlewoman?"

"Oh, I'm not a Christian gentlewoman. I'm a little heathen, with all the bad things I thought about you this morning!"

"You couldn't have thought many bad things. You're not large enough to hold more than one or two at a time. You may be a shrew, but you're not a great shrew. Do you suppose that was what Shakespeare referred to when he said, "She's little, but she's shrewd?' Come, I can't lunch on peach-bloom. By the way, I don't see that it's any economy to have a little wife. I'll be bound that dress costs as much as if you were the only living giantess."

"More!" and she pirouetted after him. And then, as he waited at the foot of the staircase over which she floated like a ball of thistle-down, he caught her in his arms, and they waltzed through the long hall. "I don't believe you'll enjoy yourself half so much in town," he said, as she swept him a great courtesy, and he held the door of the luncheon-room, and she tripped in, to the butler's open-eyed dismay.

"Oh, yes, I shall!" she cried, as she took her seat. "It isn't that I think so much of Thanksgiving, you know, or of the way we keep it——"

"No! it's a remnant of the old heathen sacrifices. We offer the best of the harvest, the fruits of the earth, and all that—regular sacrifice; kitchen-range and dining-table for altar; and then we twist the whole thing round, and are somehow the victims sacrificed ourselves."

"Yes, to be sure. But the charm of the day is that we're all together and telling each other everything—

Ma, and Jean, and Al, and Tom, and Cousin Loll, and all the rest. Oh, I'd as lief go to bed and die, as stay here Thanksgiving and think of them all together; and after Thanksgiving, you know—oh, after that, the deluge!—the deluge of balls and dinners;" and she laughed up at him so sweetly that, although he half divined her intentions in relation to that deluge, he forgave her beforehand.

"Where's the kid?" he asked.

"Now, Scott! How many times have I asked you not to call Alexis by that name? You've no idea how it sounds."

"Well, then, where's my son and heir? The little rascal is usually on hand at early notice."

"I declare! How perfectly terrible! Do you know, dear, I really for a moment quite forgot there was such a person as Alex, I felt so young and gay. I wonder what he'd say to that—the most important person in the house. I must tell you he has really modelled quite a good little lamb in the clay you sent up. You would almost know it was a lamb—at any rate, not a dog. He is crazy over old Usher's flocks ever since we took him up the mountain, the darling! Lockyer, call Master Alexis to his luncheon. I don't believe there ever was quite such a child. It makes me tremble sometimes when I look at him asleep, he seems so like an angel. Yes, a bit of the duck, please. He is composing a tune, if you'll believe it—there, I'm too scatterbrained for anything. I was just running to the piano to play you the first bars. He says he hasn't balanced them yet. Celery, Lockyer. Oh, Lockyer's gone for Alex. These ducks feed on celery, they say. Yes, I missed him so this morning. He likes to sit by when I am trying on my new gowns. He is such a little artist."

"Master Alexis is not in the house," said Lockyer, returning after some delay and interrupting the flow of talk that might have run on till morning.

"Not in the house! Where is he?"

"He is not anywhere about the place, ma'am."

"Not about the place? Why—has—didn't you bring him home with you, Scott?"

"Bring him home? I didn't take him away!" exclaimed her husband.

"Yes, you did," she cried, alarm growing in her tone. "Justine saw him in the sleigh!"

"Oh, that was in play in the avenue. I put him out and told him to run in."

"He didn't, then," she cried. "He hasn't been here all the morning. Lockyer! Haven't you seen him? Hasn't any one? Where on earth can he be?" springing from her seat. "Is he in the stables? Has any one been to the greenhouses? Yes? No? Scott! what are you sitting and staring at me for in that way? The boy didn't come in, don't you see? He has gone wandering off up the mountain-ways, and it's a blinding snowstorm already! Order the horses put in instantly, Lockyer!"

It was no longer the fairy spectacle, the child-wife. There was no more question of luncheon. She was on her feet, and in the hall.

"Scott! take your horses," she cried, "and James, and go down to the works. He may have had the laboratory in his mind. I will take the big red horse and go over to the gorge. He has been curious about the old bridge there. Send the men out in every direction, with horns, Lockyer. Let them take lanterns. It is almost two now; it will be dark in a couple of hours. Oh, my God! To think of our dancing and playing this way, and the child—Hurry, Scott! Wake up! Oh, be a man! Hurry, Lockyer!"

And as she spoke, she was regardlessly getting on her jacket over the ball dress, mechanically tying the tassels of the great cloak of white fox that Justine threw around her, and, almost pushing her dazed and thunderstruck husband into his sleigh, before she mounted her own, and was off in the thick, white weather. For the voice of the household was divided, these of the servants remembering that Alex had wanted to go with

his father in the morning, and those remembering that they had seen little footprints in the snow leading the other way. And Mr. Archer, urging his horses to a jump on his way down to the works, when waking from the shock, could for many minutes see nothing but his wife as she looked at that moment with her white face and the white cloak, and her hurrying hands, like the dream of some brooding, overshadowing spirit of a mother.

The horses were at the works before he had fully recovered himself; and once there, he found that no one had seen the boy. He had not known how much he had depended on finding him there. He had James walk the horses back; indeed, in the growing storm, it was all they could do to walk; and he himself left the sleigh repeatedly to go down this and that cross-cut in the face of the wind, to look around this angle of the rock with a blast of frozen spiculæ cutting his face, or to tread away up the frozen bed of the brook and see nothing for the drive of snow down the defile. His pulses began to beat like trip-hammers as the possibility became more and more real that the boy was not to be found and night was coming on. He went on like an automaton, as if he were benumbed, not by the cold and sleet, but by the shock of what he had not yet fully comprehended. When he reached home, he found that neither wife nor child had been heard from, nor had any of the searchers returned. Their tracks were already obliterated, and the twilight of the storm was closing around them like the heavy folds of a curtain, and Justine was lighting all the lamps and setting the windows ablaze.

He had fresh horses put in and started up the mountain, if, peradventure—he dared not shape the peradventure to himself—a child of five—he could not be living, exposed a half-dozen hours to such a storm as this. The wind came roaring down from the mountain range beyond; the gusts of snow spread in great clouds and passed; the gloom gathered; it was already dark. Still he pressed on. Now there was a moon behind the

storm that rendered it all a grey horror. He went on in the same benumbed way. He should know what he was looking for if he came across it. He did not dare to think.

Not so his wife. It seemed to her as she dashed along as if she knew the possibilities in every flake of snow, as if, too, every moment were a spark of fire. She had had the men set out across country; she herself was making directly for the shepherd's hut in the mountain, if she could reach it before dark. She remembered how the spot had taken Alex's fancy and dwelt in his thoughts. She made the groom whom she had taken with her put the red horse to his speed, if so she might reach the place before dark, she said. Every now and then she sent out her voice in a wild, sweet yödel of "Alexis, dear Alexis!" that sometimes the gale blew back in her mouth, making her feel powerless, and that sometimes its eddies snatched and carried on with a hundred echoes. Nothing but the shriek of the wind over the great slopes replied to her. If she could only reach the shepherd's hut before dark! She felt he might be there; all her hope was on the chance. If he were not there, then there was no Alexis—she had no child. The moments flew by as the snow-flakes did. Great heavens! it was dark. No constant looking out on every side for any little chance dear object now. Several times they had lost their way and retraced the distance. What precious moments! Each one of them meant life or death to her boy.

They had come to the end of the road; it was only a foot-path now, through low snow-covered thickets, over cleft rocks, round precipices, and along steep slopes. They left the cutter and went along as they could. She felt that she had no right to expose the groom's life in this way; then she felt that his life was of no sort of consequence beside her boy's. It grew a little lighter. Could the night have gone and this be morning? Ah, no, it was the moon behind the storm. Sometimes she was forced back and held still a moment; the groom reached a hand to her; she tried to speak, but nothing

could be heard but the scream of the great gust. Once the storm tore over in a burst of white cold spray that would have swept her into eternity if she had not been prone in the drift. They pulled themselves up, and continued their climbing, getting on in the occasional brief lulls. Sometimes she dropped from sheer inability to move, but all unconscious that her breath was gone, or that her lungs were furnaces of fire. Constantly before her eyes came pictures of a little dead child, frozen, beautiful, in the cleft, under that drift. And then it would sweep over her like a flame that all this came from her own restless vanity, her desire for pleasure, her neglect that morning spent before the mirror.

"My own child's murderer! My own child's murderer!"

And she could feel her little boy's terror as the elements opened their horror to him, as his way became confused, as no one heard him, as he found himself lost, as he sank down alone, cold, heart-broken, dying. Every bush, every stone, every shadow was an apparition of something that might be he; it was not—they got back into the path again. When they rested for breath, she screamed, and plunged forward again.

But there came at length a moment when the groom could go no further. She sprang away from him and went on alone. She waited for a pause of the shrieking blast to creep round a precipice; she had crossed the broken bridge at the gorge, held by one stringer, without knowing it, as if out of the body herself, or else lured by a spirit. She had but one more bad piece of overhanging rock to skirt, and then she would be out on the open, where she must take to her hands and knees through the snow, for up and over that she could see the light glimmering in the shepherd's hut.

"What of it?" she cried, "I am not in the least tired. I am health itself. I have never had a sick day. I, who have danced all night, to be tired at a scramble! If I only find him, all this will have been a frolic!"

A horrible frolic! A step, a struggle, a stagger, and

she could not move one foot before another. She leaned back against the rock where she had fallen under its overhanging shelter, and the storm whirled by. She was going to die, she said at last. Her boy was already dead. If her husband survived the exposure, he would perhaps be injured past remedy. He would be childless, wifeless, and she had done it. He would hate her —he could not mourn her. And so the two storms raged on. It seemed to her as if the fire in herself might melt the way before her.

The lulls began to come more frequently, to last longer. Although so swift and furious, it had not been a cold storm. All at once she said:

"Now I am really dying. I know I am. It is so that the dying see the world about them."

For on the falling wind the snowflakes glistened like sparks; now they floated down like rosy petals, now they were no more. The air was all a radiance of pink and gold; it was all a white, shining, and transfixed world. A long sunbeam slanted up and touched her face; touched, too, this face bending over her. It was morning, and her husband had reached her. Her husband bent and lifted her. She turned away her face, speechless. He had not found the boy. The men went before, plunging and floundering, and beating out a way to the hut. The shepherd came out to meet them, with a face bright with the cheer that morning brings after a storm. He took the mother and carried her in, and, tearing off her wraps, set her by the fireside. She fell asleep in the chair in one moment, and it seemed to the man as if some resplendent creature out of fairyland had fallen asleep by his fire.

A long, deep two hours' sleep; she opened her eyes. Ah, it was so! She had died then, after all. The little cherub whose head came against the window-light that made an aureole about it—her husband—yes, they were all here. And then Scott had her in his arms and was covering her face with kisses, and the child was running to her with his board and chalk and their rude picture of a lamb, crying——

"I drord it all meself, mamma!" and perception of the truth was coming to her, in a calmness born of all she had suffered, a calm that knew neither tears nor outcry of joy, as if all the dross in her had been burned out with that night's stress.

This was not a calm to last long. Barbara Archer was coming to the top again.

"Oh!" she cried presently. "We haven't to stay here for our Thanksgiving Day? Thanksgiving in this place! I don't deserve it, but I've got all the world, and my world, to be thankful for to-day, and I want to be thankful at home! I don't know how I ever could have thought of spending Thanksgiving anywhere else. I never will again as long as I live! I love every inch of the dear place, Scott. And I'm rejoiced that this dress is nothing but a drabbled rag. I never want to see another ball-dress or another ball, or go to town again, or see a brick in the walls there! I believe I shall kiss the threshold when I get home. Oh, how sweet and dear it seemed to me last night! Yes, indeed, I've no doubt we shall all be ill in bed to-morrow, but to-day I feel strong enough to scale the walls of heaven. Alexis Archer! You naughty boy! How could you run away so from your dear mamma? But you know, Scott, if we had been living anywhere but in the wilderness, this never could have happened. Oh, what a glorious Thanksgiving Day it is!"

A perfect epitome of the negro character is contained in this humorous sketch by Sherwood Bonner. It first appeared in *Harper's Weekly*.

AUNT ANNIKY'S TEETH.

Aunt Anniky was an African dame fifty years old, and of an imposing appearance. As a waffle-maker she possessed a gift beyond the common, but her unapproachable talent lay in the province of nursing. She seemed born for the benefit of sick people. She should have been painted with the apple of healing in her hand. For the rest, she was a funny, illiterate old darkey, vain, affable, and neat as a pink.

On one occasion my mother had a dangerous illness. Aunt Anniky nursed her through it, giving herself no rest night nor day until her patient had come "back to de walks an' ways ob life," as she expressed the dear mother's recovery. My father, overjoyed and grateful, felt that we owed its result quite as much to Aunt Anniky as to our family doctor, so he announced his intention of making her a handsome present, and, like King Herod, left her free to choose what it should be. I shall never forget how Aunt Anniky looked as she stood there smiling and bowing, and bobbing the funniest little courtesies all the way down to the ground.

And you would never guess what it was the old woman asked for.

"Well, Mars' Charles," said she (she had been one of our old servants, and always called my father Mars' Charles), "to tell you de livin' trufe, my soul an' body is a-yearnin' fur a han'sum chany set o' teef."

"A set of teeth?" cried father, surprised enough; "and have you none left of your own?"

"I has gummed it fur a good many ye'rs," said Aunt Anniky, with a sigh; "but not wishin' ter be ongrateful ter my obligations, I owns ter havin' five nateral teef. But dey is po' sogers; dey shirks battle. One

ob dem's got a little somethin' in it as lively as a speared worm, an' I tell you when anythink teches it, hot or cold, it jest makes me *dance!* An' anudder is in my top jaw, an' ain't got no match fur it in de bottom one; an' one is broke off nearly to de root; an' de las' two is so yaller dat I's ashamed ter show 'em in company, an' so I lif's my turkey-tail ter my mouf every time I laughs or speaks."

"Well," said my father, "I am going to the village to-morrow, Anniky, in the spring wagon. I will take you with me, and we will see what the dentist can do for you."

"Bless yo' heart, Mars' Charles!" said the delighted Anniky; "you're jest as good as yo' blood an' yo' name, an' mo' I *couldn't* say."

The morrow came, and with it Aunt Anniky, gorgeously arrayed in a flaming red calico, a bandanna handkerchief, and a string of carved yellow beads that glistened on her bosom like fresh buttercups on a hill-slope.

I had petitioned to go with the party, for, as we lived on a plantation, a visit to the village was something of an event.

A brisk drive soon brought us to the centre of "the Square." A glittering sign hung brazenly from a high window on its western side, bearing in raised black letters the name Doctor Alonzo Babb.

Dr. Babb was the dentist and the odd fish of our village. He beams in my memory as a big round man, with hair and smiles all over his face, who talked incessantly, and said things to make your blood run cold.

He motioned Aunt Anniky to the chair, into which she dropped in a limp sort of way, recovering herself immediately, however, and sitting bolt-upright in a rigid attitude of defiance. Some moments of persuasion were necessary before she could be induced to lean back and allow Dr. Babb's fingers on her nose while she breathed the laughing-gas; but once settled, the expression faded from her countenance almost as quickly as a magic-lantern picture vanishes, and in an incredi-

bly short space of time her five teeth were out. As she came to herself, I am sorry to say, she was rather silly, and quite mortified me by winking at Dr. Babb in the most confidential manner, and repeating over and over again, "Honey, yer ain't harf as smart as yer thinks yer is!"

After a few weeks of sore gums, Aunt Anniky appeared radiant with her new teeth. The effect was certainly funny. In the first place, blackness itself was not so black as Aunt Anniky. She looked as if she had been dipped in ink and polished off with lamp-black. Her very eyes showed but the faintest rim of white. But those teeth were white enough to make up for everything. She had selected them herself, and the little ridiculous milk-white things were more fitted for the mouth of a Titania than for the great cavern in which Aunt Anniky's tongue moved and had its being. The gums above them were black, and when she spread her wide mouth in a laugh, it always reminded me of a piano lid opening suddenly and showing all the black and white ivories at a glance. Aunt Anniky laughed a good deal too, after getting her teeth in, and declared she had never been so happy in her life. It was observed, to her credit, that she put on no airs of pride, but was as sociable as ever, and made nothing of taking out her teeth and handing them around for inspection among her curious and admiring visitors. But finally destruction came upon them in a way that no one could have foreseen.

Uncle Ned was an old colored man, who lived alone in a cabin not very far from Aunt Anniky's, but very different from her's in point of cleanliness and order. In fact, Uncle Ned's wealth, apart from a little corn crop, consisted in a lot of fine young pigs that ran in and out of the house at all times, and were treated by their owner as tenderly as if they had been his children. One fine day the old man fell sick of a fever, and he sent in haste for Aunt Anniky to come and nurse him. He agreed to give her a pig in case she brought him through; should she fail to do so, she was

to receive no pay. Uncle Ned got well, and the next thing we heard was that he refused to pay the pig. My father was usually called on to settle all the disputes in the neighborhood; so one morning Anniky and Ned appeared before him, both looking very indignant.

"I'd jes like ter tell yer, Mars' Charles," began Uncle Ned, "ov de trick dis miser'ble ole nigger played on me."

"Go on, Ned," said my father, with a resigned air.

"Well, it war de fift' night o' de fever," said Uncle Ned, "an' I wuz a-tossin' an' a-moanin,' an' old Anniky jes lay back in her cheer an' snored as ef a dozen frogs wuz in her throat. I wuz a-perishin' an' a-burnin' wid thirst—an' I hollered to Anniky; but lor! I might as well a' hollered to a tombstone! It wuz ice I wanted; an' I knowed dar wuz a glass somewhar on my table wid cracked ice in it. Lor! lor! how dry I wuz! I neber longed fur whisky in my born days ez I panted fur dat ice. It wuz powerful dark, fur de grease wuz low in de lamp, an' de wick spluttered wid a dyin' flame. But I felt aroun', feeble like an' slow, till my fingers touched a glass. I pulled it to me, an' I run my han' in an' grabbed de ice, as I s'posed, an' flung it in my mouf, an' crunched an' crunched——"

Here there was an awful pause. Uncle Ned pointed his thumb at Anniky, looked wildly at my father, and said, in a hollow voice: "*It wuz Anniky's teef.*"

My father threw back his head and laughed, as I had never heard him laugh. Mother from her sofa joined in. I was doubled up like a jackknife in the corner. But as for the principals in the affair, neither of their faces moved a muscle. They saw no joke. Aunt Anniky, in a dreadful, muffled, squeaky sort of voice, took up the tale:

"Nexsh ting I knowed, Marsh Sharles, somebody's sheizin' me by de head, a-jammin' it up 'gin de wall, a-jawin' at me like de angel Gabriel at de rish ole sinners in de bad plashe—an' dar wash ole Ned a-spittin' like a black cat, an' a-howlin' so dreadful dat I tought

he wash de debil; an' when I got de light, dar wash my beautiful chany teef a-flung aroun' like scattered seed-corn on de flo', an' Ned a-swarin' he'd have de law on me."

"An arter all dat," broke in Uncle Ned, "she purtends to lay a claim fur my pig. But I says no, sir; I don't pay nobody nothin' who's played me a trick like dat."

"Trick!" said Aunt Anniky, scornfully; "whar's de trick? Tink I wanted yer ter eat my teef? An' furdermo', Marsh Sharles, dar's jes dis 'bout it. When dad night set in, dar warn't no mo' hope fur old Ned dan fur a foundered sheep. Laws-a-mussy! dat's why I went ter sleep. I wanted ter hev strengt' ter put on his burial clo'es in de mornin'. But don' yer see, Marsh Sharles, dat when he got so mad, it brought on a sweat dat *broke de fever!* It saved him! But fur all dat, arter munchin' an' manglin' my chany teef, he has de imperdence of tryin' to 'prive me of de pig dat I honestly 'arned."

It was a hard case. Uncle Ned sat there a very image of injured dignity, while Aunt Anniky bound a red handkerchief around her mouth and fanned herself with her turkey tail.

"I am sure I don't know how to settle the matter," said father, helplessly. "Ned, I don't see but that you'll have to pay up."

"Neber, Mars' Charles—neber."

"Well, suppose you get married," suggested father, brilliantly; "that will unite your interests, you know."

Aunt Anniky tossed her head. Uncle Ned was old, wizened, wrinkled as a raisin, but he eyed Anniky over with a supercilious gaze, and said, with dignity, "Ef I wanted ter marry, I could get a likely young gal."

All the four points of Anniky's turban shook with indignation. "Pay me fur dem chany teef!" she hissed.

Some visitors interrupted the dispute at this time, and the two old darkies went away.

A week later Uncle Ned appeared, with rather a sheepish look.

"Well, Mars' Charles," he said, "I's 'bout concluded dat I'll marry Anniky."

"Ah! is that so?"

"'Pears like it's de onliest way I kin save my pigs," said Uncle Ned, with a sigh. "When she's married, she's boun' ter '*bey* me. Women, '*bey* your husban's; dat's what de good Book says."

"Yes, she will *bay* you, I don't doubt," said my father, making a pun that Uncle Ned could not appreciate.

"An' ef ever she opens her jaw ter me 'bout dem ar teef," he went on, "I'll *mash* her."

Uncle Ned tottered on his legs like an unscrewed fruit-stand, and I had my own opinion as to his "mashing" Aunt Anniky. This opinion was confirmed the next day when my father offered her his congratulations. "You are old enough to know your own mind," he remarked.

"I's ole, maybe," said Anniky, "but so is a oak-tree, an' it's wigorous, I reckon. I's a purty wigorous sort o' growth myself, an' I reckon I'll have my own way wid Ned. I'm gwine ter fatten dem pigs o' his'n, an' you see ef I don't sell 'em nex' Christmas fur money 'nough ter git a new string o' chany teef."

"Look here, Anniky," said father, with a burst of generosity, "you and Ned will quarrel about those teeth till the day of doom; so I will make you a wedding present of another set, that you may begin married life in harmony."

Aunt Anniky expressed her gratitude. "An' *dis* time," she said, with sudden fury, "I sleeps wid' em *in*."

The teeth were presented, and the wedding preparations began. The expectant bride went over to Ned's cabin, and gave it such a cleaning up as it had never had. But Ned did not seem happy. He devoted himself entirely to his pigs, and wandered about, looking more wizened every day. Finally he came to our gate and beckoned to me mysteriously.

"Come over to my house, honey," he whispered,

"an' bring a pen an' ink an' a piece o' paper wid yer. I wants yer ter write me a letter."

I ran into the house for my little writing-desk, and followed Uncle Ned to his cabin.

"Now, honey," he said, after barring the door carefully, "don't you ax me no questions, but jes put down de words dat comes out o' my mouf on dat ar paper."

"Very well, Uncle Ned; go on."

"Anniky Hobbleston," he began, "dat weddin' ain't a-gwine ter come off. You cleans up too much to suit me. I ain't used ter so much water splashin' aroun'. Dirt is warmin'. Spec' I'd freeze dis winter if you wuz here. An' you got too much tongue. Besides, I's got anodder wife over in Tipper. An' I ain't a-gwine ter marry. As fur havin' de law, I's a-leavin' dese parts, an' I takes de pigs wid me. Yer can't fin' *dem*, an' yer can't fin' *me*. *Fur I ain't a-gwine ter marry.* I wuz born a bachelor, an' a bachelor will I represent myself befo' de judgment seat. If you gives yer promise ter say no mo' 'bout dis marryin' business, p'raps I'll come back some day. So no mo' at present from your humble worshipper. "Ned Cuddy."

"Isn't that last part rather inconsistent?" said I, greatly amused.

"Yes, honey, if yer says so; an' it's kind o' soothin' to de feelin's of a woman, yer know."

I wrote it all down and read it aloud to Uncle Ned.

"Now, my chile," he said, "I'm a-gwine ter git on my mule soon as de moon rises ter-night, an' drive my pigs ter Col'water Gap, whar I'll stay an' fish. Soon as I'm well gone, you take dis letter ter Anniky, but *min'* yer don't tell whar I's gone. An if she takes it all right, an' promises ter let me alone, you write me a letter, an' I'll git de fust Methodis' preacher I run across in de woods ter read it ter me. Den, ef it's all right, I'll come back an' weed yer flower gyardin fur yer as purty as preachin'."

I agreed to do all Uncle Ned asked, and we parted

like conspirators. Sure enough, the next morning Uncle Ned was missing, and after waiting a reasonable time, I explained the matter to my parents, and went over with his letter to Aunt Anniky.

"Powers above!" was her only comment as I got through the remarkable epistle. Then, after a pause to collect her thoughts, she seized me by the shoulder, saying: "Run to yo' pappy, honey, quick, an' ax him if he's gwine ter stick ter his bargain 'bout de teef. Yer know he p'intedly said dey was a *weddin'* gif'."

Of course my father sent word that she must keep the teeth, and my mother added a message of sympathy, with a present of a pocket-handkerchief to dry Aunt Anniky's tears.

But, "It's all right," said that sensible old soul, opening her piano-lid with a cheerful laugh. "Bless you, chile, it wuz de teef I wanted, not de man! An', honey, you jes sen' word to dat shif'less ole nigger, ef you know whar he's gone, to come back home an' git his crap in de groun'; an' as fur as *I'm* consarned, you jes' let him know dat I wouldn't pick him up wid a ten-foot pole, not ef he wuz ter beg me on his knees till de millennial day."

Here is a little fable, which may not come amiss to some of the younger readers of ROMANCE. Most of the older ones have long ago learned the lesson which it teaches. It is from the pen of Georges Auriol, and was translated for the Boston *Transcript*.

THE POMPADOUR CLOCK.

In the shop of a bric-à-brac dealer there was once an old clock of the time of Mme. du Pompadour.

It was of chiseled bronze, and decorated from head to foot with gilt and enamel ornaments. Its face was all of silver, and its hours and minutes marked by precious stones. The clear tones of its striking resembled the vibrations of a harp, and it struck several notes like the chiming of ancient Flemish clocks. When it was noon it played a fragment of a minuet. It sang its little air very sweetly, but when it had finished, it could do nothing more until noon of the next day. It had formerly belonged to very rich people. Indeed, the clock had been the queen of the prettiest salon of the time. How many beautiful ladies had been charmed to listen to her!

So she was prouder than the Grand Turk!

She believed herself superior to everybody, and even the belfry chimes and the great bell itself were second-rate in her opinion.

"How pretty I am!" she said looking at herself in a mirror. "Nobody in the world has an air of more elegance and distinction than I! I am sure that, if the Shah of Persia should come by here, he would prostrate himself at my feet!"

Upon a neighboring shelf there stood a collection of little Saxony porcelain Marquises. They looked at her through their long-handled eye-glasses, and paid court to her from morning till night.

It was droll to see how the old clock was puffed up with pride in the middle of all her beaux! Sometimes she

would tell them of the boudoirs where she had reigned and of the beautiful powdered ladies in their brocaded silk robes, among whom she had lived.

She believed her charms eternal. "Ah!" said she, in her little crystal voice, "how weary I am of this shop! Every time this horrid old man comes to wind me up it seems to me as if the Evil One had laid hold of me. I do just hate him, with his eternal complaints of his aches and pains! What have I ever done to be stuck up in the middle of his dusky candelabras and his fusty old engravings of the time of the First Empire? They are too ridiculous, are they not?"

"And me, too," the little Marquis would answer.

"Do you suppose that we were born for such a fate, my dear? Never a ray of sunshine comes into this forlorn old shop!"

"Oh! it is killing, my dear; and if we did not hear your lovely symphonies it's not much pleasure we should have in the world."

Every day the clock and her admirers would repeat this discourse.

Now, it happened that one day the old bric-à-brac merchant fell ill. Gout took him, and nailed him fast to his couch, and kept him there for a month of aches and groans, in the back of his shop. The thirty-first of December came. The clock had not been wound up, and she stopped.

In vain she tried to move her hands, to sound her silvery chimes; she remained silent.

"Oh, oh! what is the matter with you, my dear?" asked the little Marquis on the shelf. "You are so silent; are you in pain?"

But the clock could not reply.

"Plague take the old witch!" said one of the porcelain figures. "She has bored us quite long enough with her babblings! Let her rest now; she has had her day!"

The mortified clock tried to strike, but she could not make a sound.

"Come, now, don't rouse the old dowager," said the

Saxony Marquis with an amused air. "It would be sacrilege to flirt with that old skeleton when we have such a bevy of pretty ladies here."

So saying he brought his eye-glass to bear on the engravings of the ladies of the First Empire with their short waists. They had been neglected so long that they were now all smiles and curtseys, and the old friendly gossip was forgotten.

The poor clock became paralytic, and she who had ridiculed the gouty merchant and his aches was now bought by a jeweller, who took her to pieces to sell the gold and precious stones on her face and in her works. Dismantled, she was transferred to the shop of another dealer across the street, where she was thrust among old rubbish on a back-shelf. There only remained a few hours of life for her, but from the corner of her dusty shelf she had time to perceive the little porcelain Marquis who had been so devoted to her; with his hand on his heart and leg extended for an elaborate bow, he was blowing kisses to the ladies of the First Empire.

It is possible that Mr. Condé Hamlin, in the following remarkable story, has hit upon something not so unreasonable, after all. It will take considerable time, however, to reconstruct that microscope. Every reader will feel a sense of personal loss in its disappearance. "A Criminal's Brain-Cells" was written expressly for ROMANCE.

A CRIMINAL'S BRAIN-CELLS.

LET me say right here, as a sort of preface, that I expect this narrative will be discredited. There never yet was a wonderful event or discovery which was not at first discredited. More than that, I must admit that, at times, I doubt whether there ever were any such occurrences as are here narrated. I am engaged, however, in a business which, one of my ecclesiastical friends in a burst of frankness asserted, tends to secularize people, and then, as if in doubt as to whether I could understand his meaning, he added that it made me cynical, cold and suspicious. If the minister was right in his diagnosis, and probably he was, then my testimony in this affair is likely to be unbiased and of proportionately greater weight. I will say at the outset—you will pardon my unpolished manner of narration—that the events which form this story occurred some time ago, but that I dreaded to make them public, lest I should be ridiculed for my trouble, but after much debate with my reluctance, I have decided to tell in plain, uncolored style an experience which even now has upon my memory the distinctness of a flash of lightning upon the blackness of the night.

It was late one evening, and I had about concluded that I would abdicate the desk in favor of another, when Dr. Zenthon entered the room, and, with an air of suppressed excitement, motioned to me to enter the private office, which I did, closing the doors in order that no stray word might reach the reporters who were swapping in a competitive way exaggerated anecdotes

of their experiences. The doctor was an old and intimate friend, who frequently dropped into the office to smoke a cigar. We had been boys together, and our youthful friendship, suspended during the doctor's ten years' absence in Germany and France while studying his profession, had been renewed with increased vigor upon his return a few months before.

"I want you to come over to the office," said the doctor. "There is nothing to keep you here, is there? I have something I would like to show you."

"Not the least," I rejoined. "I was just on the point of leaving for home, and it makes little difference whether Esculapius or Morpheus gets my time."

The doctor's office was not far distant and, although a climb of a few flights of stairs was necessary, as the elevator had stopped running, we were soon ensconced in his private room, a bottle of "red heart" upon the table looking warm and rosy, and a box of cigars standing invitingly open.

The doctor was plainly excited, although he was using some effort to disguise it. Medical men are not, as a rule, excitable, and I inferred that the cause, in this instance, was the secret to be confided. Nor was I wrong. The doctor, having taken a generous prescription from the bottle, in which I shared, drew his chair closer to me, and, in a tone that vibrated with intensity, related the following story:

"I am about to tell you the result of years of patient investigation, and you will probably think me insane until I demonstrate to you the truth of what I say. If this case results as I predict it will, I shall submit my researches to the world through the medical journals, but I desire to have a living witness to vouch for my prophecy."

"You have mentioned no case, doctor," I interrupted.

"Ah, that is so! I mean the case of the man who was picked up dead to-day on Jefferson Avenue. You know that the police reported that there was no clew to his identity. Well, I assisted in making the autopsy,

and I think I can establish what the man is; but we shall come to that in due time, if I tell my story in my own way.

"When I had completed my course at the German Universities, I went to Paris, attracted thither by the name of the great French scientist, Charcot. Not only did I attend his clinic, but by a fortunate chance I was enabled to enter Salpètrière, as an interne,—that building so gloomy to all but the scientists. My curiosity was quickly repaid, and I became deeply absorbed in hypnotism and kindred subjects, and in the experiments upon the insane, many of whom were past all human help, but who, for the purposes of study, were invaluable, being, in that involuntary way, serviceable to their more fortunate fellow-creatures.

"What a master Charcot was!" said the doctor, as a parenthetical reflection. "I remember he came into a ward one day holding in his hand seven pieces of blank, white paper, all of the same size. I wondered and waited anxiously to see the outcome, for we disciples watched the movements of the master with a care approaching reverence. Selecting a young lady, the great scientist soon hypnotized her and extending the papers, asked, 'Mademoiselle, would you not like my picture? I have just had some taken.' The patient selected a slip, expressing her delight at the gift and commenting upon the excellent likeness. A moment later the professor asked, in a casual manner, to see the card and, deftly marking it, replaced it among its fellows, extending them all again for her selection. Unhesitatingly she selected the same piece of paper, saying: 'This is the one I took before, doctor, but it is upside down.' Again and again she was tested by the assistants, but always with the same result.

"When I visited the ward later in the day, I found the patient in tears, and, upon inquiring the cause, she exclaimed, with sobs: 'They all say I am mad; that this is only a piece of blank paper, instead of a picture of our dear doctor,' whereupon she picked up the paper and gazed at it with admiration. To her deluded

brain it was a reality. This delusion lasted three days. At the end of that time the strange power lost its force.

"You can imagine," resumed the doctor, taking up the thread of his narrative, "that this and similar incidents aroused in me an intense interest in the workings of the brain. I became possessed of a desire to discover the secrets so wondrously guarded by nature. Thought, I reasoned, must make its impress upon matter as it originates in the cerebral hemispheres. If the brain were only a conductor, then it was possible that thought might traverse it without leaving a trace in its structure, as electricity passes over a wire. But as thought originates in the brain itself, as is witnessed by the sometimes unassisted action of memory, I adopted the former hypothesis as a basis for investigation.

"It is strange that liquor has no effect upon me to-night," said the doctor as he replaced the bottle upon the table, after gulping down another glass.

"In my search it was necessary to have a key, and this I tried to find in demented brains which were possessed by a single idea. One patient, for instance, imagined that he was Alexander the Great; another that he was a volcano; another that he was the moon. When such an unfortunate died, I would carefully remove the pia mater,—the nourishing tissue,—and examine the thin covering of gray matter that follows the convolutions in whose scrolls thought is supposed to leave its record. I found visible changes when I subjected sections to the test of the strongest lens of my instrument, but they were too indistinct to allow their meaning to be seized. Instead of becoming discouraged, however, I redoubled my efforts. The microscope which I possessed was the best known to science, but its power was unable to penetrate this hazy barrier. I tried new methods of hardening the lenses, new preparations for hardening the tissues. The results were startling; the cell-changes now became clearly visible. I argued from this that I was on the right track, but,

as Columbus needed a fleet to discover a new world, so I needed a microscope to discover the world of thought. My mind became absorbed with this subject, and I gave up, for a time, every other pursuit, in my endeavors to contrive a capable instrument.

"I studied the mechanical arrangement of the microscope, took to pieces the most delicate instruments of Teiss, in my search for the inspiration with which to make an instrument strong enough to discover the ultimate divisions of matter. My first effort was to re-magnify the image, but I learned, alas, that the image held nothing in itself susceptible to further detection.

"The great difficulty, I soon discovered, was the distortion of the object by a powerful lens. I made combination after combination of flint and soft glass, but all to no good end. I became so expert in constructing excellent instruments that I could have made a fortune as a manufacturer. Teiss, indeed, adopted several of my ideas and paid me no inconsiderable sum, which I appreciated, for my researches were making perceptible inroads upon my private income.

"Was I not tempted to abandon my investigations? Often, but the thought of an immortal name, should I finally be successful, caused me, as it has other seekers, to persevere.

"Did you ever notice that, no matter how abstruse your studies are, you will find others inquiring in the same direction? To this fact, and my chance meeting with a fellow-student, I probably owe all my progress.

"One day, in wandering around the Quartier Latin, in which the hospital is situated, I strolled by a dingy little shop in the narrow Rue Rollin, in whose windows some optical instruments were displayed. Entering the shop with almost aimless curiosity, the proprietor, a pleasant-faced young man, came forward and inquired: 'Monsieur, how can I serve you?' I told him, in a rather listless way, that I was seeking a means by which objects could be magnified more highly and sharply than had yet been done, when, to my surprise, his face lightened and he exclaimed: 'Monsieur, I, too,

have been working for the past five years upon the same problem!'

"Hastily setting a chair near his work-table, in a rear room, for me, in whom he discovered a fellow-enthusiast, the optician in an explanatory tone continued: 'I formerly had a fine shop on a fashionable thoroughfare, but I devoted my time so completely to my researches that customers became fewer and fewer, until at last I was compelled to come here. I persisted in my madness, as you may term it——' 'No, not madness!' I interrupted—'and studied at night and worked during the day over this self-imposed task. Last week I solved the problem. You do not believe it! Voilà! here it is!'"

The doctor stopped a moment to fill my glass, and then resumed.

"It was a peculiarly-shaped instrument. Upon a causal examination I found its most striking feature to be one lens, which was, perhaps, ten inches in diameter. 'Impossible!' I exclaimed. 'Then monsieur does not care to examine the instrument,' he rejoined. 'Yes, yes, a thousand times yes!' I answered, for hope grasps at all things, however discouraging. The optician pulled a hair from his head and placed it upon a slide in a little glycerine, and quietly focussed the object-glass. As I put my eye to the instrument, he asked: 'Is monsieur satisfied?' What could I say? Before my eyes the hair had been transformed. The sac, its hyaline inner layer, the external and inner root-sheath, the cells of the hair-bulb, the epidermis, the cells of the medulla, the hair papillæ, all were a thousand times larger and clearer than I had ever seen them.

"'If monsieur is not in a hurry——'

"'My time is entirely at your service.'

"'I will show you more then.' Quietly and quickly he stretched a fine white cloth as a screen; then, almost as quickly, he arranged a series of mirrors and lenses, and turned on a powerful electric light, having drawn down heavy black curtains over the windows. I waited with breathless curiosity. Then the instrument was

brought into a nearly horizontal position and the hair was flashed upon the screen. A hair, did I say! The section shown seemed like the limb of a mighty tree. The finest cells appeared as large and clear as the corpuscles of the blood under a lens of eight hundred diameters. I was lost in amazement.

"When I recovered, I began negotiations for the instrument, for the secret of its power the owner would not reveal. 'No, monsieur, while I do not value money myself, I owe it to others to leave them, if possible, beyond the reach of want. I must make the invention bring me gold.' I admitted the force of his argument, and, after much effort, persuaded him to sell me the instrument, claiming that he could construct another, and that I needed it immediately for important investigations. 'I would not do it, monsieur; I would refuse you, but the patients of Salpètrière all speak so feelingly of your kindness.' I disregarded his compliments, hastily drew a check for the enormous price and clutching my newly acquired prize, as soon as it was carefully packed, I rushed down to the crowded Rue Descartes, called a cab and was driven rapidly home."

The doctor paused, and I waited with breathless interest for him to continue.

"I hastily arranged the microscope in my private laboratory, and inserted a slide already prepared. The cellular structure was revealed to its last divisions with the distinctness of a map. Removing this slide and inserting another prepared from the brain of a patient possessed of a similar idea, a similarity in the arrangement of the cells was strikingly apparent. Can you appreciate the joy of that moment? I was a Napoleon! I had conquered a scientific continent! You have guessed my argument, have you not?"

"Perfectly," I replied. "You hold that thought makes a cell-change; that the same thought makes the same structural change in different brains, and that by long investigation we can obtain a key to these cellular ciphers."

"That is it, that's it!" exclaimed the doctor. "I

have only discovered how to obtain a key. Biologists must work for generations, perhaps, in developing my beginning. For years I have examined the brains of people possessed of a single idea, have carefully noted them, and have been overjoyed when a second case of the same monomania verified the deductions from the first one, as it always has. For illustration, in a simple way, the brains of two misers show a remarkable similarity in cell-changes.

"You know how I was called home by the death of my father, and that I remained in this country in obedience to my mother's wish, as I am her only child and she is near life's end. Before I left Paris, I gave Charcot a glimmering of my researches, and he has sent me many specimens, with their history, for examination. The superintendents of many asylums in America have been equally kind. In these institutions, as you know, there are many poor creatures whose entire mental organization is engrossed by a single thought, the repetition of which is their sole mental process. In that cabinet there," and the doctor pointed to a mahogany case, in which I knew he kept his slides, "are sections from the brains of several murderers, as well as sections from hundreds of insane people. With infinite work I have obtained a list of the cell-changes and arrangement for sixty-three ideas. The scientists of coming ages must carry my researches to their grand end. To-day I have tested my investigations in a new way,"—the doctor rose in his excitement and paced the room,—"and if results substantiate my theory, I shall proclaim my discovery to the world. As you know, I was one of the three doctors who conducted the autopsy upon the body of the man who was found dead upon Jefferson Avenue. It was decided that he died of heart-failure. I brought a section of the brain to the office for my own private examination, and the result has been astounding."

The doctor walked over to a stand at one side of the room, lifted a black cloth, and a great cone of light fell upon a screen hanging on the wall opposite. The ap-

pearance was that of a threadlike network. Walking over to it, he pointed to a series of lines running in one direction.

"Notice them carefully; that is a section from the brain of a self-confessed murderer who was guillotined in Paris."

The doctor withdrew the slide and inserted another. The same regular lines were noticeable in their distinctness, running in the same direction and seemingly overpowering the others. "That," observed the doctor with a satisfaction which was almost savage, "is from the brain of the man Schneider, lynched at Bitter Creek last summer, and who confessed his guilt just before they kicked the barrel from under his feet. Here is another," he remarked, as he substituted a third slide.

"But there are no such lines in this," I interposed.

"No, because this was taken from a brain of a good citizen," he replied, with a chuckle which seemed to my excited nerves almost demoniacal. Reminiscences of the spectrum analysis of my college days came to mind, only to be rudely dispelled by the intensity of the doctor's tone as he remarked, "This is from the brain of the unidentified man found dead on Jefferson Avenue."

I glanced at the screen, and there, sharp and distinct, were the lines that gave character to the first two specimens. "And you think——" I cried.

"No, not think, I know that man is a murderer; what more conclusive demonstration can you ask? Do you still doubt? Do you comprehend the importance of this work? If my assumption of the dead man's character is correct—if you choose, after these views, to call it an assumption—it proves, by the reverse of my line of investigation, the truth of my deductions, for here I know absolutely nothing of precedent conditions. But my assertion will come true. I have entered the citadel of the brain, and discovered thought." And the doctor grasped the bottle, and poured out a drink too large for several men.

To say that I was impressed by what I had heard and seen is not enough. I was staggered.

"You had better go home with me, doctor," I suggested as I said good-night.

"No, I shall remain here to-night and work. This is a great day, for it will make the truth of my theory indisputably apparent."

As I walked down the stairs to the street, I pondered over the story, and its apparent, absolute demonstration, until I involuntarily turned back to my office; arriving there, I added to the description of the unknown man, who had been found dead, a line to the effect that it was reported that he was a murderer fleeing from justice, although I had no reasonable warrant for so doing. Still the dead, I argued to myself, do not bring libel-suits. Then, at last, I went home, but not to sleep soundly, for in my dreams I could see the scalpel laying bare the brain, and its information spread upon a curtain, like print upon paper.

I did not see the doctor the next day. I was very busy, but, as I glanced at an evening paper, I saw the startling headlines:

DR. ZENTHON'S LAST CALL.

"THE DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIST FOUND DEAD IN HIS OFFICE."

Hastily glancing over the article, I learned that the janitor, upon entering the office in the morning, had found the doctor lying upon the floor, stricken down, his confrères said, by apoplexy. Evidently he had been working with his microscope, for in falling he had knocked it from the stand and broken it beyond repair.

I was about to lay aside the paper, overcome by my friend's sudden death, when I caught sight of another headline.

"ESCAPED THE GALLOWS."

"The man found dead on Jefferson Avenue proves to be the assassin Rengwald."

One of the most eagerly-desired criminals had died unknown, and had been identified by the description

of the dead man which had been telegraphed over the country. What an awful coincidence! My friend dead upon the threshold of fame, before he had time to push open the obstructing door. The gain arising from one death had been neutralized by the loss due to another.

I knew that if I should tell my story, I should be laughed at, even if I were not considered insane. Dr. Zenthon was dead, and his microscope was in fragments. I had no proof whatever, except the published claim that the dead man was a murderer, before his identity had been established. That, however, would be but slender proof. I wrote to the American minister in Paris, and asked him to find the optician's shop in the Rue Rollin; but, after weeks of waiting, the answer was received that the shop had been burned and the whereabouts of the optician was unknown.

I have remained silent a long time, and that silence may prove my sanity, but at last I have told the story of the interview with Doctor Zenthon just before his death. You may believe it or not; I do not care. If future scientists show that his assumption was correct, then I have done deserved honor to my dead friend's name in putting his claim on record.

Such women as "India," in this story by Mary Hartwell Catherwood, are working and hoping and stimulating others everywhere. The old idea that women have more tact than men is said to be exploded; but in this story, which somehow seems very natural, it is amusing to see how "India's" tact saves her brothers from a number of what are technically called "bad breaks." The story originally appeared in the *Wide Awake*.

THE ASSISTANT.

"ARE you the editor?" inquired the old farmer, pausing inside the sanctum door.

"No," promptly replied India. "I'm only the assistant. The editor has gone to the depot. Won't you sit down?"

She rose and placed a box for his seat. The only chair in the room was a revolving one screwed to the floor beside the desk.

The farmer had come through a saddler's shop to mount to the office. The publishing room was divided from this by a temporary partition of pine boards. He sat down with his hat on, and looked curiously around. Leaving his mud-spattered person out of consideration, it was a place of oddities and beginnings, rough-plastered, and containing but two windows, which looked north over the black street, the rapidly springing wooden houses, the vanishing railroad and prairie. Some woodcuts were pasted on the wall. A fancy paper-weight was among the files on the desk. A bench, pushed out at the end as if its occupant had just left it, stood before a table that depended for one corner's support on a barrel. It was the exchange barrel.

The farmer, discountenancing extravagant luxury in his own home, rather approved of what he saw, and decidedly approved of the assistant. She might be either eighteen or twenty-five, was brown, with clear black eyes, and a knot of curly hair on top of her head. She looked live, capable and girlish; able to break a span

of mules, and sell them to advantage afterward, yet delicate enough to wear the yellow blossoms of the wild sensitive plant bunched in her hair and belt.

"Well, I come to subscribe for the paper," said the farmer, after she had addressed several envelopes, talking to him about the weather as she did so.

"My brother will be glad to have your name," said the assistant. "How shall I write it!"

"Isr'el Bonebrake's my name," said the farmer, going deep into his trousers and bringing up a ragged pocket-book which, being opened, disclosed green banks of wealth. "What's the amount?"

"One dollar a year, fifty cents for six months, or twenty-five cents for three months, payable in advance."

"You don't ask enough," remarked Mr. Bonebrake, coming forward to lay down his dollar. "Two dollars is the figger for county papers. You folks has started up with the town. You must make it pay."

"Oh, we shall," replied the assistant. "My brothers will advance the price as they improve the paper."

"How many air ther' of you?"

"My two brothers and myself. One attends to the publishing and advertising; the other edits. I assist. We've heard of you, Mr. Bonebrake—you own some stock farms about here?"

"Yes," replied the farmer, nonchalantly. "I got a couple o' thousand acres or so west o' the place. The place is growin', isn't it?"

"Wonderfully. I think it's bound to be a grain and stock centre."

"Now you talk!" said the farmer with enthusiasm. "Why, when I came here twenty years ago, 'twa'n't nothing but perrara far as the eye could see. We've planted hedges, and groves has growed up. And six months ago the two railroads struck us and crossed, and here's the town! I killed rattlesnakes where Powell's puttin' up his ellyvator. We'll be a city."

"It's only a question of time," said the girl.

This pleased Mr. Bonebrake so that he repeated several times it *wasn't* nothin' but a question of time.

"So you young folks come on here and started a paper. Had you ever run a paper before?"

"My brothers are practical printers. I have learned to do a great many things."

"I bet you have," said the farmer with approval. "I like smart wimmen. Some folks doesn't; but I do."

"Oh, I just help my brothers. If the paper succeeds, you must credit it to them. In the course of a year they hope to get a large press, and keep the hand-presses only for jobbing. They will have to be very close and careful, but if they make a good paper, I know the people will stand by them."

"They will *that!*" said Mr. Bonebrake. "They won't lose for startin' in when the town's young."

Steps on the saddler's stairs now brought a young fellow into the room, who threw his hat with a slam at the table, and cried out:

"I never saw such an abominable place as this is!"

The assistant gave him a swift, salutary glance.

"Mr. Bonebrake," she said, "this is the editor, Mr. Pink Bradshaw. One of our new subscribers, Pink. My brother has not brought his editorial office up to his notions yet, Mr. Bonebrake. He's ambitious. He would like to receive his patrons in something like a palace-car, you know."

The farmer advanced his hearty hand and shook the young man's.

"Well, I declare," said he, "you don't look nothin' but a boy!"

The young fellow laughed.

"Isn't your other brother no older?" inquired Mr. Bonebrake of the assistant.

"Younger."

"We try to make up in pluck what we lack in years," said Pink. "But——"

"But we're open to suggestions from old residents," said the assistant.

"Well I sejest 'keep on,'" said Mr. Bonebrake. "Just you keep ahead."

They took him through the publishing department,

where he saw Jo Bradshaw and another printer setting type, the hand-presses, the ink-pads and a stack of printing-paper. He expressed local pride in the establishment, and shook hands with the entire force before going away.

"Now if you'll come to my place," he said, in the door, "I'll show you my kind of machinery: wind-pumps, and stawk-sheds, and tilin'."

"My brother has been thinking of visiting you and some other prominent stockmen," said the assistant, "to get an article about your methods."

"All right; come ahead! We'll kill a chicken and give you a bite to eat."

The farmer went smiling down-stairs, and the editor's assistant fixed her clear eyes on her brother.

"I don't care!" he said, sitting down at his table and striking it with his hand. "You can fix it up with the old moss-backs, first-rate, but this is a corner of the earth I cannot endure."

"So you thought you could tread on his local pride and not get hurt in return?"

"I didn't see him when I first come in. The mud! Just look at the mud sticking to my feet!"

He showed the black, waxy soil. He was a sensitive-looking, delicate-faced young fellow, fair, blue-eyed, yet with much reserve force apparent about him.

"The wind rasps my very soul!"

"Did you gather any items?" inquired the assistant calmly, having drawn a leaf forward and taken up her pencil to make a local of Mr. Bonebrake's visit.

"Yes, my dear, I did. There's a man just got off the north train to prospect this place for the purpose of starting another paper. He has money. I talked with him, or he talked to me. He goes right to the point."

"That's what made the mud and the wind and the place so unendurable," said India. "Well, let him start it."

"And run us out in two months!"

"He won't run us out."

India rose up and approached her brother. Her face was lambent, as if she were the spirit of fire.

"Pink Bradshaw, didn't we make up our minds to locate here and take all the consequences?"

"Yes."

"Am I not your older sister?"

"Yes."

"Didn't I educate myself and manage to get you boys places and give you something of a chance for yourselves?"

"Yes, my dear, you did."

"Did you ever know me to fail in anything I undertook?"

"Never."

She rested one hand on his shoulder, and tipped up his face to meet her eyes.

"I have pledged myself, my health, my life, my brains, to the success of you two boys. Pink, I would lay my right hand down to be cut off at the wrist if that would secure success to you. But instead of that, I can only give the labor of that hand. Any woman who honors her men-folks and pushes their fortunes, honors and glorifies herself. My darling boy, if you and Jo don't make men that I can be proud of, you will ruin my life and drown it in shame."

The young man's sensitive face kindled from hers.

"I wasn't whining!" he exclaimed as if spurred. "But a man can see impossibilities where a woman can't."

"Thank heaven for a woman's vision, then. I don't believe in impossibilities. I have done too many impossible things while people stood by to tell me I couldn't. When I say I pledge my life and brains and might to the doing of a thing, that thing will be done."

"I know," said Pink with enthusiasm, "you're the bravest girl in the world."

"Not at all. I'm a great baby who loves her brothers and is afraid of snakes. But if I *made up my mind*," said India, stretching her fisted arm before her, "to

take a rattler around the neck and strangle it to death, I should do it if it covered me with bites and killed me."

"I believe you!" said Pink, with a start as if he had been electrified. "Where's my clip and pencil? I must get to work. You're a howler, Lady Macbeth."

"You're a fine-strung poet, Johnny Keats. Haul the barrel and table over this way. I want to know everything you put in that first-page article."

They consulted together, India starting the theme. Pink produced decorated thoughts. She took out his adjectives and reduced his sentences. Jo called for copy. India took it to him, and distributed locals before the other printer.

"Don't you want to dress up your advertisements now while I set type for you?" she said to her younger brother, who at once washed his hands, ran them through dark curly hair like his sister's, and took his ruddy face away to pore sturdily over her desk.

This force was a regiment composed of officers; the other printer was the foreman. He felt a vital interest in the paper's prosperity. He clicked his type faster and with nicer exactness, vaguely propelled by the young woman working silently in the same room. This printer often told his wife in a general way that some women would make their men get on and work their level best, whether or no.

India wanted Jo to learn how to express himself in practical forms. He was careless, and his conversational English was stained with double negatives and many abominations. He was raw in boyhood, yet gave better business promise than his brother.

When the sun hung just above the horizon, casting long shadows eastward, she went home, stopping at one of the wooden groceries for provisions. The whole town was composed of yellow-pine excrescences, from the first gigantic hotel to the tiniest land-office. A number of people nodded to her, though she had yet no girl-intimates. Men, untying their teams to drive home across the prairie, gazed curiously at her.

Though the paper was but a few months old, they knew the minutest details about it.

As India approached her unfenced house on a path which cut across hummocks of wiry grass, she was looking forward, as the thrifty assistant-woman always does, to that time when the boys would run their firmly established paper alone, and she could devote herself to the residence, lined with pictures, glittering with silver, full of comforts, which would take the place of this three-room nest. The prairie did not bound her ambitions.

"But wherever one stands," remarked India, opening the door, "the centre of the earth is always exactly beneath him, and the centre of the heavens exactly over his head."

There was a sitting-room, a bed-room, and a kitchen. The furnishing was scant but homelike, eked out by the ornaments a quick-witted girl can make. In the bed-room she hung her sunbonnet on its nail. It was her room. The boys took turns sleeping in the office, the one who stayed at home camping on a folding-couch in the sitting-room.

"Well-nurtured girls in various cities," said India to herself, "are now sitting down to dinner, and talking about next month's trip out of town. But the assistant on the Rolling City *Chronicle* must light a fire and get the boys' supper, not neglecting to darn those last two pairs of socks while the people are gathering."

When everything was ready, she pinned a white cloth outside the window, and was busy with a sock drawn over one hand until the signal was obeyed. Then the three sat down, and India exerted herself as if the boys were desirable gentleman-acquaintances come to pay court to her. Jo was always less a cub, and Pink more a poet, in India's presence.

She followed them back to the office about dusk. A rising sweetness was abroad, and the air so clear that it cut out every object with sharp edges. The town herder was driving home the cows from their free pasture up the ridge. A freight-train far off on the west-

ern road trailed into sight, and puffs of smoke on the northern horizon denoted some approach along that line. The prairie was like a mountain-plateau in giving one a sense of nearness to the sky. The hemisphere of many-shaded greens pressed sharply against the melting west.

At the office India hurried to finish whatever was behind on the week's issue, while the rest of the establishment set type. When the ten o'clock passenger whizzed by, their week's work was done. Jo and the foreman were printing off the papers. The rumble of the presses followed India and Pink downstairs.

"Climbing upward in the night," she quoted, taking hold of his arm as they stumbled past stores where the kerosene lamps were being put out. "I wonder if I shall turn out a mere monkey, agile in climbing? I've always been undertaking something. Pink, look at the constellations. Don't they seem ready to prick us, they are so near with their sharp points? What a grand thing it is to accomplish in this world! If we die to-night, our week's work is well done: it's always wise to be prepared for accidents."

"But what does it amount to when it is done?" sniffed Pink. "That other man will run us out. I haven't any head for practical matters, India."

"Your whimpering is passed over without notice. Did you ever think—practical matters are just like piano-keys; if you don't touch them with knowledge, you make discords. We can't have a piano for about four years yet. But when we get home, I'll take down the banjo and plunk you a tune."

"And if we succeed in making a paper here, what outlook does it give us?"

"Honor, influence, home. A seat in the Senate for you or Jo if you hit the popular need, and care for it. In time a trip to Europe. All the time, exchange of prods with other minds, and a chance to push what is good and punish what is mean. At summer-resorts the well-nurtured young lady may now be entering a grand hop, but I am going home with ink on my finger, and

the assurance in my soul that in some vast future larger battles will be given me to fight, and I shall come off victor."

Past midnight, however, the assistant saw her former victories crumble before her eyes. Pink's shouting struck her through the ear like a dagger. She crossed a great change while leaping over the side of her bed. The office was on fire, but Jo was not in it, for Jo had waked Pink, and run off to others for help.

India passed through a nightmare of throwing clothing on, finding everything inside out or upside down. She was running across the open prairie with her brother, the streets rang with cries of fire, and all the inhabitants of a town so slightly built turned out with terror. A crowd was already passing pails of water from hand to hand. There was not a hose or a Babcock extinguisher within scores of miles. The harness-store had smaller buildings shouldering against it, which the owners were trying to save. A steady, roaring pillar of flame stood up from the tinder structure, lighting the prairie for miles, showing the glitter of steel rails, imperfect outlines of mill or elevator, turning to black blisters the fronts of shops across the wide street, and reflecting itself in the eyes of a thousand men and women.

It was too late to do anything but confine the fire, if possible, to the one crumbling block. There was at the time no wind, and the pails were made to do vigorous duty. In went the roof, sending up a constellation which put out half the stars.

"This is too bad, sis, ain't it, now?" said a human voice through the tumult to India's ears. Mr. Bonebrake, the stock-farmer, was there, his whip in hand ready for driving home.

"I was settin' up with hogs to ship to-night!" he shouted, "and was one of the first to see the fire. It bu'st out all at once full blaze."

"I'm afraid you won't get your paper to-morrow," said India.

"Pshaw! you'll lose consider'ble, won't you?"

"Burning up there is all that my brothers and I have

except a little cheap furniture. There goes what I have worked for since we were left alone in the world."

"Pshaw! No insurance?"

"We were to insure the latter part of this week. Every dollar was needed before. But I would like," said the assistant, shaking her finger at the fire, "to get the better of that!"

"Pshaw!" groaned Mr. Bonebrake, with full Western sympathy.

"My brothers," said India, feeling her heart swell in proportion to the calamity, "will take that old fire for a mere candle, though, to light them on the road. And I'll help!"

"What'll you do now?"

"We'll have to get presses some way, and start the paper again."

"Got any backers?"

"No."

"Yes, you have," said Mr. Bonebrake, rising also to the occasion. He pushed through the crowd abruptly, and got upon a high platform in front of one of the stores. In the midst of the roar of fire and human lungs, he began to shout a speech, saying he did not intend to do so, but pluck was pluck. He was burnt out once himself, and had a tornado tear him down another time. And these young people was bound to make it go; they had the rattlesnake-killin' grit into 'em, and who'd stand by to give them another start? He called the attention of the banker, and begged to say he had a couple of thousand acres of as good land as any man in the counties round, and them boys and that girl was to be stocked up for a fresh start if it took every acre of it. He said he was excited, but he meant it.

When people understood what he was talking about, they began to consult among themselves. The banker leaped upon the platform. He was a man of few words, but remarked that the *Chronicle* was an institution of the town, and for his part he would not have it destroyed; he would head a paper at the bank in the morning. Mr. Bonebrake shouted to him to head it now, and the

banker took out his note-book and did so, Israel Bonebrake adding his name and his hundreds with an eager hand. Somebody called out that a new man had come, well-heeled to start another paper; but the popular voice replied:

"Throw him in the fire!"

Other well-to-do citizens sprang upon the platform, and put their names and contributions upon the paper. There was a crowd raging to contribute. The public-spirited enthusiasm was so great that cheer after cheer for the *Chronicle* arose, while the fire which had destroyed its outward presence among them was sinking. The editor, Pink Bradshaw, was called upon for a speech and lifted to the platform. He had but one boot on, but, brimming to the lips with such appreciation of his townspeople as made a maturer man of him, he spoke straight out of his poetic heart to the hearts bearing him up in calamity, and made what they pronounced a "rattling good talk." Then his brother was put up beside him; and Israel Bonebrake shouted for the sister, who, to avoid good-natured violence, slipped up behind the boys, put her hands on their shoulders and looked from the background between their heads. A trio of representative young Americans.

"There they stand," shouted Mr. Bonebrake, "as peart and gritty as any bunch of yearlin's I ever see, and here we'll stand by them. They've got to have a good office and one o' them big fine printin'-presses. They'll be a credit to this town, for these here boys are as full of go-ahead as a perrara-hen is of tricks. And their sister, she'll always——"

"Assist," said India.

Mrs. C. C. Scott, of Arkadelphia, Ark., the author of the following touching story, writes, "For an all-around, without-variableness-or-shadow-of-turning friend, I still have a weakness for the old-fashioned plantation negro." Albert, the hero of her tale, is one of that sort.

"HEBBIN BY WAY OF SHREBEPOTE."

LIKE Rasselas, the Abyssinian, we lived the balmy days "only to know the soft vicissitudes of pleasure and repose." We wandered "in gardens of fragrance and slept in fortresses of security"; but like all pleasure-seekers, we were now weary of the monotonous round of uneventful days, and former delights grew stale. Gentle Mrs. Gray and Miss Harland, the invalid whose thin, scarlet cheeks and bright eyes told too plainly the presence of the destroyer, the quiet rector and the somewhat pompous major, with his little blonde wife, made up our party.

"Some one tell a story, please," cooed the pretty blonde, tossing aside "Hero Worship." "Who ever knew a live hero?" she laughingly asked.

"I," promptly answered Mrs. Gray.

"How delightful! Do tell us about him; who was he?"

"The only true heroism that ever came under my immediate notice," said the little woman, "was displayed by a hero of ebon hue, a strong young Hercules, who, though rough and untaught, possessed a grand nature."

"Yes," assented the sentimental major. "Often among the humblest flowers we find the rarest odors."

"And," resumed Mrs. Gray, "among the busy workers, with hardened hands and toil-stained faces, we find great hearts. During the late war," she continued, "my father and brother were in the army, and the overseer being drafted into service, my mother, my sis-

ters and myself were compelled to leave our beautiful home in the city and go up the river to the plantation, to manage, as best we could, the affairs of that place. Our people were trustworthy and kind, so we had but little trouble. A few weeks after our arrival at the plantation our hearts were saddened by the death of a much-loved servant—Rachel was her name; she had nursed my mother's older children, and we were all very much attached to her. Rachel died suddenly, of heart trouble, the physician said, and her little children were cared for by a good old granny. Albert, the husband of Rachel, was a 'field hand,' and a reliable man."

"Of what time do you speak?"

"This was in the spring of 1864. The trans-Mississippi department was under the command of the Confederate General E. Kirby Smith. The struggle east of the Mississippi river had drawn from us the chivalry of the great Southwest; the sons of Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas were scattered from Gettysburg to Vicksburg, and a diminished force composed of the fathers and husbands was left to meet the gathering foe that threatened, with Gen. Steele at Little Rock, Ark., and Gen. Banks at Alexandria, La. The conscript bureau had gleaned the fields of the last of the 'bearded grain,' and nothing was left but 'the flowers that grew between,'—the boys too young to go.

"Then a new order came, and the men-slaves were impressed and sent to the shops as laborers and teamsters in the various departments, to fill such places as they could, in order that for every slave so employed a soldier could be relieved, and go to the front. The burden of feeding and clothing the army devolved upon the women of the South. Cheerfully, and with untold sacrifices, did they do their part. Our people did not escape the impressment law."

"Excuse me, but whom do you mean by 'our people'"? chirped the beauty from the hammock.

"We called our slaves 'our people,'" responded Mrs. Gray with a smile. "They were impressed into service

and sent to Shreveport, La., to work. Among the men was one who had been married only a year; he objected to leaving his wife and baby. Jake was his name. While they were discussing the question among themselves, Albert presented himself at the dining-room door.

"'Good mawnin', mistis,' he said, doffing his hat, 'an' 'skuse me fo' 'sturbin' yer brekfus, but I'se axin' a favor dis mawnin'.

"'All right, Albert. What is it?' asked my mother.

"'Yer see, mistis, as how Jake is 'pressed' along wid tudder niggers an' Jake he got a likely wife an' mighty antic boy.'

"'Well?'

"Albert hesitated and scratched his woolly pate.

"'I know,' my mother said sympathetically, 'I know all the circumstances, but am powerless.'

"'I ain't blamin' yer, mistis; de Lawd knows I ain't er blamin' nobody; but I druther go in Jake's place an' let him stay wid hees wife an' boy.'

"'Why, Albert!' exclaimed my mother. 'You can't mean it! How should I get along without you? Think of the number of women and children to be provided for; the men left behind are too old and the boys too young to be depended on.'

"'I'se recommembrin' all dat, mistis; but I knows what it is for a man an' wife to be sipperated. Oh, mistis! de days all lonesome and de nights a year long. Tain't no sunshine for Albut here nor nowhar. Hit's all a dark shadder an' de moonshine don't nigh tech Albut. No, mistis, hit's all trials an' tribberlashins. Limme go, please, mistis. Let Jake stay wid hees wife,' pleaded the earnest voice, half-choked by sobs.

"'Unk Albert,' called my little sister going to his side, 'would you really go away to save Jake from going?'

"'Yes, honey,' he replied, his sorrowful eyes lighting up with a pleasant expression, as with his great black hand he stroked her sunny curls. 'Yes, honey, Unk Albut ain't got nuffin' t' stay here fer. Jake got hees wife. Honey, ax yer mudder t' let old Albut go.'

"'Use your own pleasure, Albert,' at last consented my mother.

"'De Lawd bress mistis!' he cried as he hastened to the quarters.

"'De Lawd sabe mistis!' echoed Uncle Gabe, waving his hat as he leaned on his crutch.

"They left us that afternoon, one hundred tall, strong sons of Ham, of varying ages from twenty to forty-five years.

"'Albert,' said my mother, 'I must tell you before you go that in Shreveport men die at the rate of fifty a day. Often the death-rate is greater. The fever is terrible.'

"She looked up into his face, hoping by this last appeal to discourage his going.

"'Kain' he'p it, mistis; I spec' hit's 'bout es nigh a route to Hebbin by Shrebepote as hit air by dis plantashin. Albut ain't keerin', mistis, kaze de big white gates up yander's wide open waitin' fer Albut; an' Lawd! Rachel's er standin' jes' inside.'

"'Boys!'" he cried, turning to the multitude assembled under the oaks on the lawn. 'Boys, mind mistis, an' do right an' be bidderble. Be hones', boys; don't go to cuttin' up no disregyardable capers an' pranks. Jes' whirl in an' up an' make de crap fer mistis. Nebber mine de cotton, but ten' de cawn; plow deep, boys, an' don't let de grass git de upper hand o' de crap.'

"'Move on there! Move on, boys!" commanded their leader.

"'Good-by, mistis. Far'well, chillun!" cried Albert. 'Gawd bress mistis!'

"'Gawd bress mistis!' cried a chorus of a hundred voices as they marched away.

"In those turbulent times there were no established mail-routes in our country; indeed, the receipt of a letter was quite an event. For two months we heard nothing of our men; then one ran away from Shreveport and came home more dead than alive. Of the hundred who had gone from our plantation, twenty-two had died. Albert had been detailed on hospital duty,

and before another month had passed, he, too, had given up the burden of life. Good, faithful Albert! Though he lives neither in song nor story, his was as grand a heroism as was ever recorded; his Rachel waited just within 'the big, white gates' and waited not in vain." Mrs. Gray had "tears in her voice" as she concluded her pathetic story.

"We brush the skirts of martyrs and tread the path with heroes, and are all unmindful; but God noteth all, and will reward as surely as the day followeth the dark night," reverently spoke the white-haired rector, as we sat silent and thoughtful.

"And it's just as near Heaven by way of Silvandale as home," murmured the invalid, folding her light wrap closer about her.

This interesting legend, which Granville Sharpe has invested with the charm of his imagination, while following as closely as possible the teachings of history, has been prepared expressly for ROMANCE.

THE RED CROSS.

A LEGEND OF ANAHUAC.

THE streets of Tezcuco were filled with people in holiday attire, late in the afternoon of a festal day in the summer of 1519.

The public rejoicings were in honor of the marriage of the most important person, just at that time, in the kingdom, who, with his bride, was now proceeding from the temple, where the wedding ceremony had been performed, to a beautiful palace located on a hill a little out of the city.

Nothing could be more enthusiastic than the demonstrations of the populace on this occasion. There was not a man, woman or child in Tezcuco who was not either represented in the throng or watching the procession from roof or window; the gathering was still further augmented by people from adjoining towns, and by deputies from the Mexican court, sent by no other than the royal Montezuma.

The bridal pair were preceded by twenty pages, scattering flowers so profusely that they formed a thick, odorous carpet under the feet of the following multitude, filling the air with delightful perfume, while slaves walking on either side of the newly-married couple, held over their heads branches of palms to shield them from the burning sun. Next following came the priests, six in number, their matted hair falling over their shoulders in tangled profusion, their eyes, sunken and half-concealed under heavy brows, emitting now and then a dull gleam as of fire half-hidden under embers. They walked with bowed heads,

looking neither to the right nor to the left. Then came the nobles, with the deputies; last of all the pushing, thronging multitude, eager to see, talking as they went.

"Does he not look noble, Tula?" cried one young girl, through whose clear brown skin the rich color burned warmly. "The gods must be well pleased with him. Did you ever see such eyes! And what a noble bearing! How calm and strong he looks! It is said that he is descended from the royal family of the Toltecs, who reigned centuries ago."

"He looks grave," returned Tula critically. "And so does his bride, the Princess Thesta. How pale and cold she looked in the temple! It seemed as though she did not care at all for the great ceremonial!"

"I wonder why Nehual chose *her!*" observed the first speaker as they pressed on. "There are many fairer than she in Anahuac."

"But did you not hear that they were playmates when they were children, and sweethearts before he was chosen by the priests? When the time came that he was to choose his bride, and all the maidens passed before him for selection, Thesta came with the others, and she was chosen."

"But let us hasten, or we shall not see them enter the palace," said the other, who had paid little attention to this story, with which she was probably already familiar.

The hill ascended, the wide portals of the palace were seen to be open. The final ascent was made by a long flight of steps hewn in the natural porphyry and polished until they shone like mirrors. As the youth and maiden ascended these steps and stood in the doorway of the palace, they were visible to all, and a murmur of admiration rose from the multitude. The bridegroom was attired in a robe of finest texture, made of the woven hair of rabbits, overlaid with the down of humming-birds. On his neck and wrist shone a necklace and bracelets of gold set with precious stones. The dress of the bride was white, covered in part with beautiful embroidery; a long veil made of the fine web of the *pita*, ornamented with strings of pearls, fell over

her face and down to her feet. A gleam of sunshine struck them for a moment, lighting up the scene with indescribable brilliancy and beauty; then they crossed the threshold, followed by the train of nobles who were to remain at the wedding feast.

Beautiful as was the exterior of the palace, it gave little promise of the oriental luxury and magnificence within. The apartment first entered was shaped like a rotunda, guarded at each entrance by a statue of gold or silver; the walls were hung with featherwork made to resemble mosaic, gleaming with all the tints of the rainbow; a small fountain in the centre sent up cooling showers of perfumed water; while soft music, from stringed instruments touched by invisible players, mingled agreeably with the tinkle of the water on the marble basin. In a second room opening from this was spread the wedding banquet.

The table was laid with dishes of silver and gold, except the drinking-cups, which were of tortoise-shell. The feast was composed of wild turkey, served with a choice and favorite sauce; various other kinds of game; vegetables and fruits of every variety found in that latitude; delicate confections and pastry made of maize flour and sugar; and a delicious decoction prepared from the froth of *chocolatl*, flavored with vanilla and spices and eaten cold. The beverages were a solution of *chocolatl*, a fermented liquor, and pulque.

Nehual and his bride were shown with the utmost deference to seats of honor at the table. The nobles and their wives, and the deputies also seated themselves, and all proceeded to make merry. A slave bearing an immense fan of feathers stood behind each person, gently agitating the air, heavy with the perfume of flowers. The guests ate, drank, and talked with rare good humor, paying the most distinguished attention to Nehual, though neither he nor his bride entered very heartily into the hilarity of the hour. Noticing this, one of the nobles clapped his hands, and immediately a dozen pages entered, bearing stringed instruments, and followed by two beautiful female slaves, who

danced to the music. One of them chanted a song in a sweet voice, touched with a mournful cadence, in which Nehual was consigned to the regions of immortal youth and bliss in the bosom of the sun.

Thesta, now that her veil was removed, proved, in spite of the comments of the maidens, to be strikingly beautiful, her luxuriant hair and large, lustrous eyes, black as night, contrasting prettily with the pallor which showed through the clear olive of her skin. Those wonderful eyes were cast down—she toyed daintily with her food and was silent.

Meanwhile the pulque flowed freely, and the nobles grew more hilarious. They drank, with due reverence, to each of the gods, and then to Nehual. This was a signal for the breaking up of the feast. The guests took their leave, kissing Nehual's hands. At last they were gone, and he looked for Thesta; but she, too, had vanished, and he was alone.

Nehual was one of the finest representatives of the few remaining Aztecs in whose veins ran some of the blood of a mighty but fallen race, then nearly extinct. His comparatively fair skin, fine physique, noble demeanor and higher grade of mentality, all gave evidence that he was of a gentler race than the Aztecs. For this reason he had won the attention of the priests at Tezcuco, whither he had been conducted the year previous. Here he had been surrounded by every luxury, adored by the people and fêted by the nobles. This had not spoiled the youth, however. His face wore an habitually serious expression, sometimes deepening into melancholy. His features, though not lacking in dignity, were not so prominent and harsh as those of the Aztecs. The fine forehead and delicately-moulded temples hinted of the characteristic of a people who had delighted in music and the arts, and who proved such architects that a dozen centuries have failed to efface their work. His nose and chin denoted decision and courage; but his mouth wore a winning sweetness through all its lines of strength.

In some respects this marriage was a strange one,

even among the strange customs of Anahuac. The Princess Thesta had been well known to Nehual since his boyhood, and he could not remember the time he had not loved her. But his devotion to her for years had met with no response save coldness and disdain. When, therefore, a few days before, he had been required by law to choose a bride, from several voluntary candidates, what was his surprise to see Thesta among them. He had chosen her, for his love had never grown cold, but he had been permitted to hold no conversation with her.

At last there was a rustle of drapery upon the polished floor—the princess appeared. She had replaced her dazzling white robe for one of yellow—a symbol of mourning,—which draped her closely from head to foot, except for a glimpse of the beautiful throat and lower arms. Her hair was gathered closely at the back of the head, and held in place by the thorns of the cactus. She did not once glance at Nehual, but paused a long way off, leaning with bowed head upon a statue. As he approached and attempted to kiss her hand—rather timidly, for, though brave in battle, he feared the temper of a capricious woman—she drew back with a low obeisance, saying:

"Nay, rather let me do homage to thee, thou favored of the gods!"

Nehual fancied he detected in her tones the mocking defiance he knew so well of old, and, folding his arms and regarding her gravely, he said:

"The Princess Thesta is pleased to make merry!"

But even as he spoke, she hid her face in her hands, and her form became tremulous with emotion. Was it grief or laughter? Was she still mocking him? No, she was weeping. He had never seen her weep before. Even as a child she had been stoical—and he was deeply touched. In a moment the dark head was drawn against his shoulder, and he was questioning:

"Thou art weeping—for me? Then surely thou dost love me!"

"I know not that I love thee!" she said, aroused into

perversity again. "Think'st thou I came here, as came those other foolish maidens, clamoring for thy love? I, the Princess Thesta!"

"Then why camest thou?"

She hesitated, glancing at the slaves who were removing the remains of the feast. Understanding the unspoken wish, Nehual led the way to the garden, where they might hold uninterrupted conversation. This garden, which, together with the palace, had been the work of a former king, had at this time lost none of its grandeur and beauty. A famous historian has described this garden—the aqueduct carried over the hill on huge buttresses of masonry, from which water was distributed in numerous channels, falling in cascades, dancing in merry rivulets, and lending a refreshing coolness to the atmosphere. Into the depth of this fragrant wilderness Nehual and Thesta walked in silence, seating themselves at length in a beautiful pavilion overlooking the surrounding country.

The custom of the Aztecs, as is well known, was to offer a yearly human sacrifice to Tezcalipoca, the god of the earth and the air. The strongest, fairest and bravest youth that could be found was chosen for the victim, and for a year previous to his immolation was placed under the charge of tutors, who instructed him in the manners and etiquette of the court—a captive, yet treated as a king. The afternoon before the sacrifice he was married to one of the most beautiful maidens in the kingdom, who ever thereafter was considered as a daughter of the gods, or as a superior being. The youth who was chosen to be sacrificed was worshipped as a divinity, being under the special protection of Tezcalipoca, by whom he was granted the boon of immortal life, and permitted to live forever in the sun, which he accompanied in its supposed revolutions.

This, then, was the destiny of Nehual on the morrow. He had looked forward to it for a year with stoical composure, for it formed part of a religious rite with which he had always been familiar. It was a great honor in this life, and conferred immortal happiness in the next:

besides, of what use would it be to anger the gods by any unwillingness to be offered to them? Yet, so strong is the mortal, so weak is the flesh, that all the grandeur of the gods and the glory of renown and the rapture of immortal youth faded out into insignificance at the sight of one brown-eyed, olive-skinned, black-haired woman, in a yellow cotton gown, who sat by his side leaning forward, and looking straight before her under arched, black brows. Nehual knew at what she was looking and his gaze followed hers—across Lake Tezcuco, glittering like silver in the moonlight, to its opposite shores, where rose a structure of stone, built in a pyramidical form, having five stories, while upon the summit were two small towers, in which burned the sacred fire, twinkling like stars in the distance. This was the Temple of Sacrifice.

Pointing to it Thesta said:

"Have you heard what has been predicted? It is said that Tezcalipoca shall be dethroned, and that a strange god shall reign in Anahuac."

"Who foretold this?"

"The astrologers. Hast thou heard nothing? Not many nights ago Montezuma was troubled with strange dreams, and sleep departed from him. Rising from his couch, he walked to his casement, where he stood pondering how many captives he would have offered at the next sacrifice. At that moment the heavens grew black before him, and the moon and stars went out. Even while he wondered at this strange sight, there appeared upon the sky, flaming as with fire, but red as blood, a cross! Then Montezuma sent in haste for the astrologers, from whom no secrets are hidden, and they told him that an unknown god would appear and reign over Anahuac."

"This is a strange story," said Nehual, rather incredulously.

"It is strange, but good to hear, for then the priests will offer no more human sacrifices."

"How do you know this?"

"Listen, and I will tell thee. I will speak low, lest

the breezes should carry my words to the ears of a slave. Canst thou hear?"

"I can hear thy thoughts, I love thee so!"

"Thou wert ever a gallant youth, delighting in flattery. But this is the story. An old woman who had journeyed leagues from the South came to us not many moons ago. In the country whence she came, she had seen a band of white warriors, who came to those shores in boats with great white wings, like birds. None knew their tongue, but it is thought they are those of whom the astrologers have spoken. One day one of their number, a priest, fell as if dead, smitten by the piercing rays of the sun, and this woman, whose name is Naphalla, nursed him many nights and days with great care and worshipful attention, as was befitting toward a messenger of the gods. He knew a little of our tongue, and by it, and by means of signs, he told Naphalla of his God, who he said once came to the earth in the likeness of a man—not warlike, after the manner of our gods, but full of love to men."

"Then he cannot be a god," said Nehual. "None of the gods are fashioned thus, with hearts that can be touched with human suffering. It is for them to exact much and give little. We are even as worms under their feet, and what matter if they tread on us? Nay, they delight in our torture, and exult in our misery, as well thou knowest. Their anger must be appeased, lest it be visited upon the land in famine or upon the people in pestilence. With these things are the gods well pleased."

"But it is not so with the unknown God—He requires not human sacrifice."

"Said Naphalla so? 'Tis but a nursery tale!"

"Nay, but it is true. The priest whom Naphalla served, used often to read in a book curiously fastened together concerning his God, and she told me some words which I have remembered, for I said them often when there were none to hear. These words said she: '*Sacrifice and burnt offering thou dost not desire; in the volume of the book it is written, Lo, I come!*' "

As she spoke, Thesta clasped her hands and gazed out over the moonlit valley, where the dark forests melted into the blue of the sky.

"What look'st thou for, sweetheart?" asked Nehual, noting her anxious gaze.

"For the unknown God," she answered simply. "Said he not, 'Lo, I come?'"

Nehual did not reply, not wishing to destroy her hope, and yet not himself believing the story. Thesta took from her bosom a small cross, saying:

"Seest thou this cross? Every day for six days have I prayed on our housetop for the God of this cross to save thee. I have told Him who I am—the Princess Thesta, of a family most nobly esteemed in Anahuac; and perchance if He saw and heard me, He will grant my petition."

"Thou hast done this, and still thou dost not love me?" cried Nehual, who understood the characteristics of the gods better than those of women, and so was sore perplexed.

"I know not what love is," said Thesta "though I have heard it sung of by silly pages while they played upon the lyre of summer afternoons in our garden for our pleasure. But this have I vowed—I will not hear of love, either from thee or any other, until I have answer to my petition. On yonder roof until to-morrow's sun rise, will I entreat the unknown God for thy life—*Aloho!*" *

Nehual sprang involuntarily forward to detain her, but she eluded his staying hand and fled like a deer. Nehual knew well her tenacity of purpose, and that he had probably seen her for the last time. He paced up and down the garden through the slow, calm hours of the night. Outside the garden walls waited a circle of slaves, ready to detain the captive should he feel disposed to escape.

As the first flush of dawn reddened the East, the city was astir. The nobles repaired in a body to the palace. Thesta, from her position on the roof, saw them

* Love to you.

advancing. With gathering despair she swept the horizon again with her eyes. All was as on the preceding night. She ran to meet Nehual, but though his face softened into tenderness as he met her gaze, it was stern with an awful resignation, and her heart sank within her.

By this time the procession has reached the street, which is already crowded with people. The sun is well up—a great, round, glaring ball of fire, before which the people prostrate themselves and pray. The vast concourse move silently. Not a sound is heard but the tread of feet, for the excitement is too intense for words. The religious zeal, or intoxication, has nearly reached its height, and popular emotion is too deep to express itself in aught but silence.

Arrived at the lake, the royal barge was found waiting, in which Nehual and Thesta were placed, followed by several of the nobles. The common people sprang into canoes, and thus transported themselves across. When they reached the opposite shore, they were met by the priests—six in number, five of whom were clad in dingy robes covered with faded hieroglyphics, the sixth, who was the executioner, being dressed in vivid scarlet. They walked behind the victim, chanting a religious song; while under their heavy brows their eyes gleamed deadly and cruel, burning with ferocious fire.

The outer stairs, or stone steps, by which the temple was ascended, were on alternate sides. A narrow gallery completely encircled the tower at the foot of each stairway. Thus the procession could be seen by those below upon each of the four sides of the tower at once, until each story had been ascended. Upon the last floor, between the two small towers where burned the sacred fire, was a huge block of jasper, slightly convex, upon which the victim was bound, hand and foot. At the head of this rude altar was an image of Tezcalipoca, carved in stone, grinning horribly.

The priest in scarlet seized a sharp weapon like a razor, made of *itizil* (a quartz-like substance), and approached the victim, while the chants of the people be-

low grew louder and louder, and all threw themselves upon their faces. At this moment Thesta sprang forward with a wild cry—half of triumph, half of fear,—interposing herself between the priest and his victim, clutching the rough sides of the altar with such tenacity that she could hardly be wrenched away; and when this was done, the prints of her bleeding fingers were left upon the stone. A shriek of mortal anguish rang through the temple as they threw her back with muttered imprecations, and this was echoed by a strange sound from the populace who waited below—first a murmur, then a cry of consternation and fear. At that moment Hernando Cortez sprang up the stairs, followed by fifty of his soldiers.

The policy of Cortez at first in his relations with the Aztecs is well known. It was marked by a pretence of friendliness, underneath which was some real bravery and heroism, and, withal, a paramount desire to establish the Christian faith on the shores of the New World. But his progress in this respect was slow, and he had come to the conclusion that his hope would never be realized as long as he permitted human sacrifices to take place. He had determined, therefore, no matter what the immediate result might be, to root out this abomination from the land. On this occasion, he with his small army had marched all night, as was his custom, resting during the heat of the day. The region roundabout Tezcuco being thickly covered with forests, the approach of the army had been unnoticed by the excited worshippers at the temple, until it was fairly upon them. Even the astonished natives were petrified rather than angry, for they had never seen anything like the strange creatures, half-beast, half-man, as they supposed, for horses were unknown to them. Filled with superstitious fear, they saw only the advent among them of the white gods of whom they had already heard rumors, and with fickle enthusiasm they turned away from Tezcalipoca and prostrated themselves before the commander of the Spanish army.

As Cortez entered the temple of sacrifice, he carried

in one hand a drawn sword, and in the other a banner of black velvet upon which had been embroidered, by some noble Spanish ladies, a scarlet cross. Pushing aside the priests, he approached the victim and cut the thongs which bound him, motioning him to rise. The soldiers at the same time seized the image of Tezcalipoca and threw it down the stairs, while Cortez placed in its stead the velvet banner. At this moment a woman, young and beautiful, clothed in a yellow gown, ragged and torn, came forward with an air of ineffable triumph, and, clasping her bleeding hands, knelt down and kissed the cross.

Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Isabella, while sending sundry instructions to Cortez by a relief-ship, bade him, if possible, bring or send her a specimen of the strange savages, in whom she had become curiously interested. It so happened, therefore, that long afterward, on his next visit to Spain, Cortez took with him Nehual and Thesta, both of whom had been baptized into the Christlan faith, and had been useful to him in many ways in his dealings with the Aztecs. The pair attracted no little attention at the Spanish court, though, on account of the secrecy which veiled all transactions of that age, their real nationality was known but to a few. Thesta had taken her jewels with her, and was surprised to learn that they were worth a fortune. With the proceeds thereof a fine estate was purchased, where she and her husband spent the remainder of their days, and the land of Anahuac knew them no more. Their children married into the nobility; and their descendants are to-day numbered among the proudest families of Old Castile.

All dwellers in the vicinity of the great Falls can relate many remarkable adventures of those who have been lost or saved there; but few are as interesting or have ever been told as graphically as the following, which is written for ROMANCE by W. Thomson.

A GALLANT RESCUE.

For many years I resided in the village of Chippewa, situated at the mouth of Welland River (commonly called Chippewa Creek), which flows into the Niagara about one-and-a-half miles above the Falls, and perhaps three-fourths of-a-mile above the first rough water of the terrible Rapids.

Notwithstanding the dangerous proximity of the Falls, people are continually crossing and recrossing the river here, between the American and Canadian shores.

Great caution is generally exercised by boatmen, and the loss of life on this stretch of water is less than on any body of equal width—constantly traversed by small open boats—that I know of. Deplorable fatalities have occurred from time to time, but these have always been the result of ignorance, or gross carelessness.

Three cases of this kind have come under my own observation and I was unhappy enough to see the victims drawn down to the first leap of the Rapids, after which not a trace of any one of them was ever seen.

One of these instances was that of a farmer, who drove his horses and wagon into the edge of the river, at a shoal-place about a mile above Chippewa, to let the animals drink—that particular spot being the only one for many miles which was adapted to the purpose.

The man, though perfectly familiar with the locality, carelessly drove in too far, and, upon attempting to turn about, one of the reins caught under the neck-yoke, the horses floundered into deep water, the heavy running-gear sank, dragged the poor brutes down and

drowned them, while the light pine wagon-box floated off with the man!

The unfortunate fellow was known to be a good swimmer, and if he had instantly jumped out and made for shore, all would have been well. But he was frightened out of his wits and did nothing but scream for help. Now comes the strangest part of the story. The accident was witnessed by another farmer, plowing in a field close at hand. As he well knew, there was not a boat of any kind nearer than Chippewa, and yet, instead of springing on one of his horses and riding for life, he actually walked down along the bank, keeping abreast of and talking to his imperilled neighbor and cheering him by the assurance that he would get a boat and take him off when he should come in front of the village!

Gradually—for such is the trend of the current there—as the box floated down-stream, it was borne further and further from land, and when it did arrive opposite the mouth of Welland River was fully 400 yards out.

Only then did the sympathizing friend rush into the village and give the alarm.

From the edge of the Niagara to Chippewa Bridge, where the nearest boat lay, was at least 300 yards. This distance he had to run, and find some one to unlock, equip with oars and man the boat. The consequence inevitably was that the doomed farmer was far beyond human help even before it started—*started* only and then turned back from the hopeless chase.

That awful cry, "A man going over the falls!" resounded through the village streets, and a crowd of people quickly gathered.

The hapless castaway was now shooting down that smooth, swift incline of water immediately above the Rapids. He had evidently given up all hope of rescue, and was kneeling on the bottom of his frail raft, with outstretched, clasped hands, apparently in prayer.

Faster and faster he was hurried along, and in another moment we saw the box lifted high on the crest of the Rapids' first tumultuous ridge, shaken to pieces

like a pack of cards and floated in fragments away amidst the seething hell of waters, while its late occupant disappeared forever from human view.

The second person whom I saw thus done to death was one of a party of duck-hunters, who had been shooting in the weedy passage between Grand and Buckhorn Islands. In spite of his companions' advice to the contrary, this man determined to remain out all night, in the hope of making a good bag in the early morning.

The last thing his comrades saw of him—so they told us—he had drawn the bow of his boat a little way up on a sand-bar at the lower end of Buckhorn island, and laid himself down to sleep in her.

It is supposed that, while he slept, a change of wind caused the water to rise sufficiently to set the boat free—a moderate down-stream breeze would do it. At all events, shortly after daybreak next morning, some one of the Chippewa's early risers called out that an empty boat was going over the Falls. A knot of interested spectators soon flocked down to the river's edge to see the exciting event—opinions being about equally divided as to whether the light skiff would live to reach the cataract itself, or would go to pieces on touching the Rapids.

As we thus speculated, our idle talk was suddenly replaced by a general cry of horror, for, from the bottom of what we had thought an empty shell, the head and shoulders of a man all at once became visible, and the next moment he rose to his feet. Beyond all doubt the luckless being had only that instant awakened.

Can human imagination conceive or mortal pen describe what that awakening must have been?

A few short hours before, he had lain down to rest in fancied security and with bright anticipations of coming sport. Now he opens his eyes and looks around to find himself—where?—on the very brink of that wildly-tossing, awful flood from which all the wealth, all the united powers of the world, cannot save him!

The boat was almost in the exact centre of the river. Those of us who had field-glasses could see that a group

much larger than our own had congregated on the American shore to witness the final catastrophe.

It was not long delayed. In less than a minute after the poor man had become aware of his situation, he took off his hat, waved it frantically toward either bank, and an instant later, was gone! Nor did any part of the boat again appear.

One more sad incident, and we will then turn to something brighter.

Two half-intoxicated young men, residents of Chippewa, one morning made some disturbance in one of the hotels.

To get out of the way for the present, they then crossed the river to Port Day. There they drank, we were told, more liquor and became very quarrelsome. Toward evening they set out to return, but instead of making a start from away up-stream, they rashly pushed directly into the current, and attempted to make the passage in a straight line.

It is barely possible that they might have succeeded in landing on the Canada side away down by the head of Street's Island, had not a great crowd of people, noticing their dangerous position, assembled on the bank to watch their progress. The poor fellows, each pulling a pair of sculls, had come more than half-way across, and were now, as nearly as we could judge, only a few hundred yards above the edge of the rapids, when, to our infinite dismay, they suddenly turned back toward the American shore! Why, will never be known, but it was supposed that, seeing the crowd on the bank, the young men, in their maudlin condition, conceived the idea that it had gathered for the purpose of arresting them for the morning's fracas.

Whatever the reason for their mad move, it proved a fatal one. They had lost some distance in turning, and had not gone fifty yards on the return course when we could see that they were being carried rapidly down-stream. Now the appalled and utterly helpless spectators were compelled to witness a pitiable sight indeed. The imminence of their peril seemed to have sobered the

men; and, so soon as they found themselves being swept broadside down, they turned the bow of their boat straight up-stream, meantime plying their oars with desperate energy, in the forlorn hope of gaining on the mighty current!

Both were skilled oarsmen, and so rapid and powerful were their strokes that, for the space of five seconds, they actually held the light boat motionless, as we could see by aligning it with landmarks on the further shore.

But the unequal strife could not last. Of what avail was human muscle here?

Foot by foot, stern foremost, but still bravely pulling, they were borne down the smooth shute, nearer and nearer to that first awful cascade, which sends its spray heavenward almost in the centre of the Rapid's upper edge.

Among the watching crowd on shore were several women, and these broke into anguished cries as they saw the lost men heroically battling for life up to the last hopeless moment.

Passionately, for the time bereft of reason, they appealed to us to save them, but we could only groan in our impotence and await the end.

The poor boys did not cease to row until their little craft was on the curling brink of the dread plunge. Then both relinquished their oars, dropped to their knees and covered their faces with their hands. Brief space had they in which to pray; for now the boat was caught by the writhing wall of water, tossed high in air, while the men still clung to the cross-seats, and then—Oh, the horror of it! all were whirled over and over and swallowed up in those cruel depths from which no human creature has ever escaped alive.

Now for a less painful scene:

On a certain summer day, a young woman, half-crazed by terror, rushed along the lower street of Chippewa, screaming: "Oh, help! help! help! My little Jimmy's away out on the big river, and he'll go over the Falls!"

Instead of jumping at once for boats, a number of

men, as if doubting Mrs. Armstrong's word, ran down to where a view of the Niagara could be obtained, and there, afloat on its surface in an old boat, saw Jimmy apparently enjoying his ride, but being gradually carried outward and down stream.

It seems that the little, five-year-old fellow had been playing in a small scow, the bow of which rested lightly on the beach, and had rocked it free of its hold, to his great delight, and floated serenely away.

On the west bank of Welland River, about 250 yards above its junction with the Niagara, stood the house and shop of Joel Lyons, a stout, muscular shoemaker and a practised oarsman. On hearing the alarm given, this man wasted no time in idle exclamations, but ran at once to where several boats were moored further up stream. Selecting one already provided with sculls, he sprang into it and was away at full speed before most of the onlookers had collected their senses.

Just at this moment I arrived upon the scene and witnessed all that afterward occurred.

Now there are two entrances and exits to and from the Welland; one, known as "The Cut," being on the upper or west side of an isolated bluff, called Hog Island, and the other—the original channel—on the lower or east side.

It was from out this last-named passage that the child had floated, and, consequently, he was much nearer the falls than if he had emerged into the Niagara from the Cut.

Lyons, of course, took the east channel, but he had quite 400 yards of slack water to row over before striking the larger river, and when he reached it the little scow with its precious freight was at least that distance from shore and much closer to the rapids than even the boldest oarsman would ordinarily dare to go.

So utterly desperate appeared the chances of rescue, that, as he sped down Chippewa Creek, the shuddering spectators, among whom was Mrs. Lyons, with one accord called out to the gallant boatman not to throw away his own life in so mad an attempt. But the brave

fellow paid no heed to their cries. Out to the broad bosom of the Niagara he pushed, and was presently flying obliquely down and across stream with the speed of a racing-shell. His wife screamed aloud in an agony of apprehension, and to even the coolest among us it seemed all too horribly certain that we should witness a double tragedy.

More and more earnestly, without a break or a skip, and with never-relaxing strength, the experienced sculler bent to his work, glancing now and again over his shoulder at the precious prize he had determined to win—or die in losing.

To us, who, hardly daring to speak or breathe, watched the fearful venture, its success appeared well nigh impossible. The child could, perhaps, be snatched from the boat before reaching the rapids. But what then? Neither he nor his rescuer, we felt convinced, could ever regain the shore.

The poor women, Lyons' wife and Jimmy's mother, sobbed pitifully as we all hurried down the edge of the river so as to keep abreast of the skiff. None of us dared to encourage them by a hopeful word, for not one of us believed that either would ever again be clasped in the arms of husband or son.

The tiny scow was now quite 600 yards from shore, and, with gradually accelerated motion, was drawing frightfully near the rapids. But the pursuing boat went four feet to its one and was swiftly closing the gap between them. The innocent babe had at last become alarmed, and as Lyons drew near, he stretched his little arms imploringly toward him, a sight which drove the women nearly frantic and caused tears to roll down more than one manly cheek.

"Oh, hush! hush! not a word nor cheer yet," some one said in a choking whisper, as the two boats came together. "The fight is still to win!"

As he ranged alongside, Lyons pulled in one oar, leaned over the gunwale, caught up the child and lifted him into his own boat. "Too late! Oh, too late!"

shrieked his agonized wife. And, indeed, it so seemed to each one of us.

But then the noble fellow, cool as if there was no danger within a thousand miles, reshipped his oar and did the only one thing which could offer a possible chance for life. He did not vainly attempt to stem the current by rowing upstream, nor even directly toward the shore, but turned his bow quartering down, and, pulling with nerves of steel and giant strength, shot with arrowy speed diagonally athwart the river's course, and, in less than five minutes, landed safely at the head of the channel running between Street's Island and the mainland!

Then—but why go on? No language, much less my poor pen, can adequately describe the scene which followed.

This incident is a matter of history, I presume, but I may inform those who now read of it for the first time, that the Royal Humane Society of England soon after sent to Mr. Lyons its gold medal, in recognition of his daring deed—how daring no one unacquainted with its scene can realize.

It is said that every woman has two heroes,—one the hero of her eye, the other, of her soul. If so, Miss Carnahan was like the rest of them—but do they all have the courage to choose the right one? Her story was written for ROMANCE by R. L. Ketchum.

MISS CARNAHAN'S TWO HEROES.

THE manager of the "C——", as he rode up to the ranch, on his return from town, looked about as cross as a thoroughly good-natured man can. I was smoking my pipe on the veranda, and could see, afar off, that Sutley's wonted smile was missing.

"Read that," he said, as he flung himself from the saddle and turned the bronco loose to run to the stables. "Reckon we'll have to sleep on the roof, or in a haystack. Mph! Seven tenderfeet! Two weeks!" And Sut stamped into the house, swearing softly, while I unfolded the telegram he had flung me and learned that Major Carnahan, president of the Willow Ridge Cattle Company, to which the "C——" ranch belonged, would arrive, three days later, for a visit of two weeks, and that he would be accompanied by half-a-dozen other "tenderfeet."

They arrived in due time—or, rather, undue time, for we had inaugurated a house-cleaning and general fixing-up campaign which was only about half completed when they came. Besides the major, there were Mrs. and Miss Carnahan; Mr. Potter, who was tacitly understood to be Miss Carnahan's "accepted"; Mr. and Mrs. Wells, and Miss Daisy Wells, a young lady of three, to whom the whole outfit capitulated at first sight.

Next day, "Teddy" returned from his hunting trip. "Teddy," it may be as well to state, was Edward Thayer, A.M., cousin to Sutley, and a young man of charming personality and considerable attainments. To him fell the duty of acting as chief entertainer of the guests, and he filled this post to the queen's taste—

or, at least, to Miss Carnahan's, which was much more to the point. The others of the party were easily entertained, but not so Miss Carnahan. She wanted to see everything that was worth seeing, do everything that was worth doing, and, seemingly, tried to find out how many harum-scarum escapades she could accomplish in the shortest space of time; and, of course, this just suited Teddy, who was always ripe for fun.

So, while the others stayed, for the most part, close to the ranch, those two were galloping here, there, and everywhere, as happy as a pair of city school-children turned loose in the country for a short outing, and determined to make the most of it.

Did you ever stop to think how well acquainted two young people, left pretty much to themselves, can become in a very few days, especially when their tastes lie much in the same direction? I have known people on board ship, total strangers, become such good friends in three or four days as to confide their family secrets to each other—people, at that, who, under ordinary circumstances, were perfect oysters of reticence; and a plain's acquaintanceship usually is equally rapid in growth.

Sut and I watched them ride away, one morning—Miss Carnahan and Teddy—the former, in her tight-fitting riding-dress, her cheeks glowing, her eyes sparkling, looking the picture of health and girlish beauty; Teddy's six feet of bronzed, robust manhood sitting the saddle as if it had been his cradle, his wide hat stuck carelessly on the back of his handsome head, and his picturesque dress showing off his straight, strong figure to great advantage. They turned at the top of the hill, and waved us a laughing good-by.

"By gad! Scribe, aren't they a stunning team?"

They were, indeed; and I feared they might come to think so themselves, which would be hard for poor Potter, and maybe for a certain young lady back in the States, to whom Teddy wrote regularly every Sunday.

Poor Potter, it was plain to be seen, was not enjoying himself hugely. He heartily detested riding, and for

guns and fishing-tackle he had no use whatever. It is quite likely that he did not altogether approve of his capricious sweetheart's daily expeditions with the handsome and captivating Master of Arts, who, Sutley informed me, was more than inclined to get into flirtations of the pseudo-desperate character, if, really, he was not somewhat susceptible, which is quite possible. However, the tenderfoot was plucky, and gave no outward and visible sign of whatever feeling he may have had in the matter. I was dreadfully sorry for the poor chap, for he was a rattling good fellow—one of the sort who make lots of friends among men, but who are altogether too good to succeed with women to any remarkable extent.

As the days went by, it became more and more apparent that Teddy and the fair visitor were nearing the danger-point in their swiftly-strengthening friendship. "Straws show——" and so do the most insignificant actions—a word, a glance, or even less; and when, at the end of two weeks, Miss Carnahan pleaded for another ten days' stay, and the major and the rest, of course, assented, I knew there were breakers ahead for Potter.

One hot, quiet afternoon, just as Teddy's and Miss Carnahan's horses were brought around in front, where we were all lounging on the veranda, Sut, who had been busy writing, came out and joined us with "Where's my best girl?"

Sure enough where was Miss Daisy? Everybody asked everybody else, and everybody else disclaimed all knowledge of that young person's whereabouts; so, while the rest of us began scouring the house and stables for her, Teddy and Miss Carnahan mounted and rode away to see if she had not wandered off on the prairie, or up in the hills.

We could not find her, so all the available horses were pressed into service, and we all started out in search of the little one. A sudden inspiration directed me toward the prairie-dog village, at the end of a coulé, half-a-mile away, and I hurried to it.

As I rode out of the coulé, the sight that met my eyes

almost made my heart stand still. Fifty yards away, standing between two mounds, was little Daisy, and in a circle, surrounding her, were a score of rattlesnakes, all coiled ready to spring, but, for some inscrutable reason, hesitating. Either the child was not alarmed, or else she was too frightened to cry.

I halted short. To keep on was to invite the death of the little one. What could I do? As I sat, half-dazed, I heard the sound of horses' hoofs, and presently Teddy and Miss Carnahan rode up. Unable to speak, I pointed to the scene among the mounds. Miss Carnahan nearly fell from her saddle, and her eyes started. Teddy's face blanched, but his nerves did not desert him. I saw him measure the distance with his eye, and look to see if his saddle girths were all right. Then he spoke hastily:

"There's only one chance, but I'll try it."

There was a bound and a rush, as the buckskin flew toward the mounds; then we saw Teddy reach down—there was a flash of white—and in another second the baby was safe in his arms, and the knowing bronco was carefully picking his way out of the prairie-dog village. One chance, Teddy had said. Yes, that was all, and he had won. If his horse had stumbled—if he had missed his grasp of the child, or if she, frightened at the sound of his approach, had started to run, the result would have been very different.

As we rode thankfully homeward, I could not help seeing the glances Miss Carnahan occasionally cast at the figure of the gallant Teddy, who hurried on ahead with the child; and I was glad, for Potter's sake, that Teddy did not also see them.

But this incident was not the only one that gave Teddy a chance to raise himself in everybody's estimation. Fortune is understood to favor the brave; certainly she favored Teddy, and that, too, the very next day.

Major Carnahan and his daughter, Potter, Teddy, Sut and the scribe had ridden up the creek to see a bunch of choice cattle; and, having plenty of time to spare,

and wishing to show the guests some pretty scenery, we extended our trip several miles further.

Miss Carnahan and Potter had ridden up the slope on the right to investigate some buffalo-wallows, and Teddy had fallen behind a bit to pluck some flowers, when, suddenly, Sut started, and listened intently. From the hills on the east, beyond where Miss Carnahan and Mr. Potter were, a rumbling, rushing sound came, mingled with confused bellowing.

"Stampede!" gasped Sutley. "Hi-i-i! Come away quick!" and he motioned to the couple on the slope, but they did not see nor hear him. We started toward them, full speed, yelling at the top of our voices, just as the head of the herd of wild, thirsty cattle appeared, bearing directly toward the unconscious couple at the buffalo wallows. They were coming as only stampeded cattle can come, and there were but a few seconds of time in which to escape.

Presently Miss Carnahan heard us, and glanced up, then seemed to call Potter's attention to the coming cattle. We rode out of the way, noting, as we did so, that the engaged couple were doing likewise. Then something happened that has cost more lives than one. Miss Carnahan's horse was "stampeded"—he balked and fought the bit, but would not stir an inch out of his tracks, while Potter's, on the contrary, took the bit in his teeth and tore away at fearful speed, resisting all his rider's efforts to hold him.

Miss Carnahan was just out of the track of the rushing cattle, but every man of us knew that before we could reach her side they would be passing her, and her horse was almost certain to dash into the herd. She did not attempt to dismount, but we could see that she realized her danger, and was making every effort to control her horse, but to no purpose.

What we had expected, happened. As the stream of cattle thundered by, Miss Carnahan's horse leaped forward, almost unseating her, and raced directly into the edge of the herd, heading diagonally for the thickest part. Then, while we gazed, too far away to aid, some-

thing flew across the slope in front of us, and Teddy, forcing his splendid buckskin to his top speed, followed the stampeded horse.

It seemed hours, but it was only a minute or so, when it was all over. Teddy, guiding his horse beautifully, overtook the gray before he reached the centre of the herd. We saw Miss Carnahan look up in response to his shout, evidently understanding that she was to slip her stirrup; we saw Teddy reach her and encircle her with his arm; and, presently, guided by a master-hand, the buckskin, carrying double, gradually worked his way out of the crush and to a place of safety not twenty yards from the bank of the creek, where Miss Carnahan's pony and a score of cattle were crushed to death.

It was a very thankful party that went home carrying Miss Carnahan, who, of course, fainted promptly when the danger was over. The major gripped Teddy's hand in silence, too much overcome to speak his thanks, and we embarrassed him frightfully with our admiration, the last one of the party to shake his hand being poor Potter, who, from the top of a hill half-a-mile distant, had seen the whole affair, and whose "God bless you, Thayer!" came from the fullness of a relieved heart. If any more agonizing situation can be conceived for an adoring lover than must have been Potter's, helplessly watching his sweetheart being carried to almost certain death I have yet to know it. And then, that night, I heard her tell him, meaningly, that she despised a coward!

She understood, next day, that he was not to blame; but the words had been said, and other words, too. I don't know what these latter were, for Teddy probably spoke them as he carried Miss Carnahan away from the stampeded herd—but it is quite certain that he said something, and that there was sorrow ahead for Potter and the Massachusetts girl (to whom Teddy had not been writing as regularly as usual), unless something happened to prevent.

Just a day or two before the visitors were to leave us, Sutley came in one morning with a very grave face.

"Professor Loring's got the small-pox," he announced. "What on earth can we do for him?"

Professor Loring was a naturalist and botanist from an Eastern college, who had, a few weeks previously, come to study the flora and fauna of the Willow Ridge region. He had, with Sut's permission, built a shanty about two miles up the creek, where he lived all alone among his bugs and snakes and lizards, and we had seen very little of him, but that little inclined us very much in his favor.

"He went over in the hills to the Indian camp for some snakes," continued Sut, "and, of course, caught it there. When I knocked, this morning, he called to me and told me he had the small-pox, and to keep away, but to send a doctor if one was to be had. But, great Scott! there isn't a doctor within fifty miles, for Doc Murray went East last week, and he's the only one at Smithburg."

We all sat silent for a moment. Then Teddy, with much concern, for he had become quite well acquainted with the professor, and liked him, remarked:

"Poor old chap! I don't see what *can* be done for him."

"Has he," asked Potter slowly, "no one at all, Mr. Sutley?"

"Not a soul."

"Then I will go over and take care of him. I have studied medicine."

I am sure Miss Carnahan had not spoken to him for two days or more, and I had feared it was all over between them; but when she started up and ejaculated, "Wallace Potter, you shall do nothing of the sort!" I knew and was glad that there was still hope for him and that Massachusetts girl.

Then, while we all knew that Professor Loring would die unless some one cared for him—anyhow, perhaps—we interposed all sorts of objections. It was Quixotic, wild, utterly foolish, said the major. Why, the man was a total stranger, and the idea was not to be thought of for an instant. Added to the major's objec-

tions and those of the rest, were his daughter's efforts to assert her authority, but it was no use. Potter was firm. "It is my duty," he said simply, "and that's all there is to it."

"Then, Wallace Potter, if you *will* do it, I shall stay and take care of *you.*" And Miss Carnahan said it as if she meant it, and every one knew that stay she would.

I don't know what Miss Carnahan and Mr. Potter said to each other during the half-hour they were alone together, right after the above conversation, but I know that when he went away after dinner, with his basket of medicines and things, she kissed him before us all, and then went to her room, where she remained over an hour, joining us, later on, with suspiciously red eyes. I know also that Teddy that evening, overcome by the moonlight or something, proposed to Miss Carnahan, and was kindly, but firmly, refused, and informed that the heart he asked for belonged to Mr. Potter—much to Teddy's after satisfaction, as he informed Sut and myself.

"Because," said the young man, "it would have put me in a deuce of a pickle, and, besides, I didn't really mean it. It was because she looked so sweet at that moment that I couldn't think of anything else to say, I guess. She's a lovely girl, and no mistake, but——"

And in that simple "but" was conveyed a world of assurance that the little girl in Massachusetts still held the larger portion of Master Teddy's eccentric heart.

It went hard with the unfortunate sick man, and for a time we feared he could not live; but Potter was fighting a good battle, and fighting to win, and one morning, when Miss Carnahan and the scribe rode over, as some of us did every day, with food and other necessaries, the glad look on the worn, thin face of the brave nurse told us that the victory was his.

Then Miss Carnahan cried, and called him a hero, and her dear, darling, brave boy, quite regardless of the presence of the scribe. "And now," she concluded, "I suppose I'll have to take care of *you*, just as I knew I should."

And so she did. I suppose that, according to accepted traditions, I ought to kill off poor Potter at this point, or, at least, bring him to death's door, but I'll do nothing of the kind, for it didn't happen that way. Po ter was ill, it must be acknowledged, but the story doesn't end with his untimely demise. He didn't even have the small-pox, but was just laid up a few days from nervous exhaustion. Then came the end of the story—at least, of Miss Carnahan's part. For Potter was pretty weak to travel, and would need good care; so, one day, the minister came over from Smithburg, and performed, in the big room of the ranch-house, a marriage ceremony as binding as the most fashionable kind that obtain in New York—and when our guests went away there wasn't any Miss Carnahan.

It wasn't so very long after that, that Teddy returned to Massachusetts, and found that girl still waiting for him. Cards.

It isn't necessary to kill a man off in order to make a hero of him; besides, it is so much more satisfactory to be a live Benedict than a dead hero.

The following is one of the most powerful among the brief sketches of Edgar Allan Poe. The remark of a man who had read this extraordinary tale in his boyhood shows the tenacity with which Poe's expressions linger in the memory: "'The Tell-Tale Heart!' Oh, yes. I remember it well. It is in that story a comparison is made with *the watch whose ticking was smothered in cotton.*"

THE TELL-TALE HEART.

TRUE!—nervous—very, very, dreadfully nervous I had been and am; but why will you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in heaven and in earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to say how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it—O, so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a

dark lantern, all closed,—closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. O, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly—very, very, slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha! Would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room I undid the lantern cautiously—O, so cautiously!—cautiously (for the hinges creaked) I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights—every night just at midnight—but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his evil eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch's minute-hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I felt the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back—but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers), and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out—"Who's there?"

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed, listening;—just as I have done, night after night, hearkening to the death-watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or grief—O, no!—it was the low, stifled sound which arises from the bottom of souls when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself—"It is nothing but the wind in the chimney—it is only a mouse crossing the floor," or "It is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp——" Yes, he has been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions, but he had found all in vain. All in vain; because Death, in approaching him, had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel—although he neither saw nor heard—to feel the presence of my head within the room.

When I had waited a long time,—very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little—a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it—you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily—until, at length, a single dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and fell upon the vulture eye.

It was open,—wide, wide open—and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness—all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else

of the old man's face or person; for I had directed the ray as if by instinct precisely upon the damned spot.

And now have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses?—now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew that sound well, too. It was the beating of the old man's heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker.—The old man's terror must have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment!—do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous; so I am. And now at the dead hour of the night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer, I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me—the sound would be heard by a neighbor! The old man's hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once—once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gayly, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart, and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all, I dismem-

bered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even *his*—could have detected anything wrong. There was nothing to wash out—no stain of any kind—no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all—ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock—still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart—for what had I now to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night; suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police-office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled—for what had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search—search well. I led them, at length, to his chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them here to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My manner had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted of familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale, and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears, but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct; and I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling; but it continued and gained

definitiveness—until, at length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.

No doubt I now grew very pale;—but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased—and what could I do? It was *a low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton.* I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly—more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. I arose and argued about trifles, in a high key and with violent gesticulations; but the noise steadily increased. Why would they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observations of the men—but the noise steadily increased. O God! What *could* I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—louder! And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—No, no! They heard!—They suspected!—they *knew!* They were making a mockery of my horror! This I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—And now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! *louder!*——

"Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed! Tear up the planks!—here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart."

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A beautiful illustration of the value of the little gift; of the widening circles which a tiny pebble may cast; is furnished in this Christmas story by Georg Ebers. It is translated from the German by Mrs. Edward Hamilton Bell.

A HANDFUL OF NUTS.

"In a dream I was transported into the world that lies beyond—the beautiful heaven, opened to all mankind by the blessed Christ-Child.

"That hell lies underneath heaven you have doubtless heard. Naturally the holy dead see and hear nothing of the pains of the lost, for that would entirely spoil the joys of Paradise for them; but now and then—I believe once a year—it is given to the blessed to look down into hell. There is, however, one condition in particular attached to this privilege. When the dome which conceals hell from the sight of the angels is opened, it is for the relief of the condemned. God in his mercy has decreed that the saints shall look down into the abyss in order to tell St. Peter if they see among the damned any one from whom they have received any benefit, or of whom they have even heard any good. If the keeper of heaven's gate is pleased with the generous action which the lost soul performed while on earth, he has the power of shortening the time of punishment, or can even pardon it altogether, and bid it enter into Paradise.

"As for me, I arrived in Paradise on a day when hell was open to view, and came to know, thereby, many strange things.

"That the angels are full of pity and glad to relieve the misery of the unfortunate, whoever they are, and wherever they may be, goes without saying, and it will not be necessary to tell you how diligently they sought to remember some one good deed that might redound to the credit of one of the lost. But St. Peter is a mild and just judge and the gleaning yielded but a small

return, for only few of the angels could recall any act that was worth mentioning. It was also granted to me, to look into the place of torment, and the things I saw there were awful. Picture it to yourself as you will! When I recovered from the horror that fell upon me, I recognized many men and women whom I had known on earth. Among them were many whom I had been accustomed to consider pious and virtuous, and whom I had expected to find in a high place in heaven, rather than there below, and yet of those very persons the elect could recall the fewest deeds that had been done from purely generous motives. An act was mentioned of this one or that which on the surface seemed good, sometimes even great; but there on high the springs of human actions are open to view, as well as the real end which the author had in mind, and these were always such that those who had performed the best deeds could be accredited with the least charitable intention. Their pious works had always been executed in order to make them conspicuous in the eyes of men or to attain for themselves some distinction, or to flatter their vanity, or to arouse the envy of their neighbors, or in some indirect way to increase their riches.

"The poor things who were disappointed, as well as the unfortunate ones for whom no voice was raised, made me very unhappy; but I could do nothing for them.

"Among the latter I noticed a woman whom I had known well on earth, and who deserved to be among the lost, I thought. I had never anticipated any other sentence for her. Although she had possessed more than was needed to gratify her own wants, she could never be moved by the most touching appeals of the poorest to relieve their distress. She had used other people to satisfy her selfish desires and then discarded them ruthlessly. She had gone through life without loving one single soul—of that I felt convinced—and no one had loved her and she had died unregretted. She must have been as wretched on earth as she was there in hell, for which of us can be happy here, if we do not love and are not loved?

"'There is no chance of a voice being raised in her favor,' I said to myself. But I was wrong; for at that moment a lovely angel-child flew past me on its blue-and-white wings. Without any sign of fear it flew direct to St. Peter, who looked formidable enough with his long beard and great keys, and, pointing with its little forefinger to the hard-hearted woman, cried: 'She once gave me a handful of nuts.'

"'Really,' answered the keeper of heaven. 'That was not much, and yet I am surprised; for that woman would not part with so much as a pin during her life. But you, little one, who were you on earth?'

"'Little Hannele was my name,' answered the angel. 'I died of starvation, and only once did any one give me anything in my life to make me happy, and that was that woman yonder.'

"'Marvelous,' answered Peter, stroking his white beard. 'No doubt the nuts were given as a miserly payment of some service you did her.'

"'No, no,' the angel answered decidedly.

"'Well, tell us how it happened, then,' the apostle commanded, and the dear little soul obeyed:

"'My sick mother and I lived in the city all alone, for father was dead. Just before Christmas we had nothing more to eat. So mother, though she lay in bed and her head and hands were burning, made some little sheep of bits of wood and cotton and I carried them to the Christmas market. There I sat on some steps and offered them for sale to the passers-by; but nobody wanted them. Hours passed, and it was very cold; the open wound in my knee, which no one saw, pained me so, and the frost in my fingers and toes burned dreadfully. Evening came, the lamps were lighted, but I dared not go home; for only one person had thrown a copper into my lap, and I needed more to buy a bit of bread and a few coals. My own pangs hurt me, but that mother lay at home alone, with no one to hand her anything, or support her when her breathing became difficult, hurt me still more. I could hardly bear to sit on the cold steps any longer, and my eyes

were blind with tears. A barrel was set down in front of the house, and while a clerk was rolling it over the sidewalk into the shop, the stream of passers was stopped. That woman there—I remember her well—stood still in front of me. I offered her one of my sheep, and looked at her through my tears. She seemed so hard and stern that I thought, "She won't give me anything." But she did. It seemed suddenly as if her face grew softer and her eyes kinder. She glanced at me, and before I knew it she had put her hand in the bag which she carried on her arm and thrown the nuts into my lap. The cask had been rolled into the shop by this time, and the throng of people carried her along. She tried to stop. It was not easy, and she only did it to toss me a second, third and fourth handful of the most beautiful walnuts. I can still see it all, as if it were to-day! Then she felt in her pocket, probably to get some money for me, but the press of people was too strong for her to stand against it longer. I doubt if she heard that I thanked her.'

"Here the angel broke off and threw a kiss to the condemned woman, and St. Peter asked her how it happened that she, who had been so deaf to all appeals from the poor, had been so generous to the child.

"The tormented woman answered amid her loud sobs: 'The tearful eyes of the little one reminded me of my small sister, who died a painful death before I had grown to be hard and wicked, and a strange sensation—I know not how it happened myself—overpowered me. It seemed as if my heart warmed within me, and something seemed to say to me that I should never forgive myself as long as I lived, and should be even unhappier than I was, if I did not give the child something to rejoice over at Christmas-time. I longed to draw her toward me and kiss her. After I had tossed her half of the nuts, which I had just bought, I felt happier than I had for many a day, and I would certainly have given her some money, though only a little.'

"But Peter interrupted her. He had heard enough and as he knew that it was impossible for any one in

heaven or hell to tell an untruth, he nodded to her, saying: 'That was, beyond dispute, a good deed, but it is too small to counterbalance the great weight of your bad deeds. Perhaps it may lighten your punishment. Still, great riches were meted out to you on earth, and what were a few nuts to you! The motive that urged you to bestow them is pleasing in the sight of the Lord, I acknowledge, but, as I said before, your charity was too paltry for you to be released from your pains because of it.'

"He turned to go, but a clear voice of wonderful sweetness held him back. It was that of the Saviour, who advanced with majestic dignity toward the apostle and spoke: 'Let us first hear if the alms-giving of which we have just learned was really too small to plead for leniency toward this sinning soul. Let us hear'—turning to the angel—'what became of the nuts.'

"'O dear Saviour,' answered the angel, 'I ate half of them, and I was grateful to you, for I felt that I owed them to your bounty, as they were my "little Christ-child," as the people in the city where we lived called a Christmas present.'

"'You see, Peter,' the Saviour interrupted the angel. 'Do we not owe it to the nuts of that woman that a pure child's soul was led to us? That in itself is no small thing! Tell what further happened to you.'

"'I ate most of them,' the little girl answered, 'but I had still more to eat by Christmas Eve; for the people who had looked at me when the woman threw something into my lap were interested in my suffering, and soon I had sold all six sheep, and, besides many pennies and groschen, one big thaler had flown into my lap. With these I was able to buy mother many things that she stood in sore need of, and, though she died on New Year's morning, she had had many little comforts during her last days.'

"The Anointed cast another look full of meaning at Peter, when a large and beautiful angel, the spirit of the mother of the cherub, began: 'If you will permit me, O holy Jesus, I, too, would like to say a word in

favor of the condemned. Before Hannele came home with the nuts I lay in bed, without hope or help in my great suffering. I had lost all faith, for my prayers had not been heard, and, in the bitterness of my heart, it seemed that you, who were said to be the friend of the poor on earth, and God the Father, had forgotten us in our misery, in order to overwhelm the rich with greater gifts. But when Hannele came home, and lighted the little lamp, and I saw her tiny face, where for a long time I had seen no smile, but only pain and grief, now beaming with joy, when I saw the nuts and the other good things which she had brought, and saw her pleasure in them, my belief in thee, O Lord, and in the kind Father returned, and I ceased not to be grateful to the end. If now, in the glory of Thy magnificence, I know bliss unutterable, I owe it to that woman, and to the fact that she was good enough to throw the nuts into Hannele's apron.'

"Peter nodded affirmatively. Then he bowed before the Saviour and said: 'The little gift of the condemned soul has indeed borne better fruit than I imagined; yet when I tell you what a great sinner she was on earth . . .

"'I know,' the Son of God interrupted him. 'Before we decide upon the fate of this woman, let us hear what the child did with the rest of the nuts, for we know that she did not eat them all. Now, my little angel, what became of the last of them? Speak on. Gladly will I listen to you.'

"Hannele began anew: 'After they had buried mother, they sent me into the country among the mountains, for they said it was not the duty of the city to care for me, but that of the village parish, where my parents were born. So I was taken there. The six nuts that I had saved I took with me to play with. This I most enjoyed doing in the spring, alone on the little strip of grass behind the poor-house, in which I was the only child. Besides me there were but three old women "being fed to death," as the peasants used to say. Two of my companions were blind, and the third was dull-

witted and gazed ever straight before her. Not one of them noticed anything that happened around them, but my heart used to grow light when everything about me budded and sprouted and burst into bloom. My body was always aching, but my pains could not lessen my enjoyment of the spring. Wherever I looked, men were sowing and planting. It was the first time that I had ever seen it, and the wish came over me to confide something to the good earth that would take root and sprout and grow green and high for me.

"'So I stuck four of my nuts into the ground. I put them as far apart in the small space as I could, so that if big trees came from my seeds, they might not stand in one another's way, but might all enjoy the air and the sunshine that I was so thankful for. I saw my seeds sprout, but what became of them afterward I did not live to see. Two years after I sowed them a famine fell upon us. The poor weavers, who lived in the mountain village, had all they could do to nourish wife and child. There was little left for the poor-house. As I was already ill, I could not stand the misery, and I was the first to die of the dreadful fever caused by hunger. Only one of the blind women and the dull-witted one followed the sack in which I was buried—for who would have paid for a coffin? The last two nuts I divided with the old women. Each one of us had a half, and how gladly we ate the little morsel, for even a taste of any dainty seemed good to us, after we had lived on nothing but bread and potatoes. From here I watched the other nuts grow to be trees. All four had straight stems and thick crowns. Under one of them that stood near a spring, which is now called the Fresh Spring, an old carpenter who came to the poor-house built a bench.'

"Here another angel interrupted the little narrator with the question: 'Do you mean the nut-tree in Dorbstadt?' and, receiving an answer in the affirmative, he cried: I, master, I am that old carpenter, and during my last summers I had no greater pleasure than to sit by the Fresh Spring under the nut-tree, and while I smoked

my pipe, to think of my old wife, whom I was soon to find again with you. In the autumn, too, many a dry brown leaf found its way among the more expensive tobacco ones.'

"'And I,' cried a former peddler, breaking into the carpenter's story, 'I assuredly have not forgotten the tree, where I always set down my pack when my shoulders were nearly broken, and under whose shade I used to rest my weary limbs.'

"'I, too! How often have I stopped under the spreading branches of that tree on a hot summer day and found refreshment!' cried a former post-messenger of Dorbstadt. A porter who had also lived there added his praises.

"'But the nut-trees were cut down many years ago,' the latter added.

"'I saw it,' cried the spirit of little Hannele, and one felt from her tone how she deplored it. 'They were felled when the poor-house was given up. But the great Son of God has now heard what he wished to know.'

"'No, no;' the Saviour answered, 'I should still like to know what became of the wood of these trees.'

"'The voices of several angels were heard at the same moment, for many of the poor weavers of Dorbstadt were to be found in the heavenly kingdom. St. Peter, however, bade them to be quiet, and permitted only the one who had last entered the Abode of the Blessed to speak.

"'I was the village doctor,' this one began, 'and I quitted the earth because I, too, fell a victim to the pestilence of which many of the poor people were dying, and against which I fought with all my small powers, but with small success. I can tell you all that you wish to know, my Master, for during forty-five years I devoted my humble services to the sick poor there. When Hannele died in our poor-house—it happened before my time—the misery was even greater than at present. The weavers were ground down by the large manufacturers, until an energetic man built a factory

in our village and paid them better wages. As the population then increased, and consequently the number of patients, space was wanting in which to house them, for the dilapidated poor-house—whither they were carried—was no longer large enough to accommodate them all. Therefore the parish, aided by the owner of the factory, built a hospital for the whole district, and the site of the old poor-house was chosen for it. The beautiful nut-trees which Hannele had planted had to be destroyed. I was sorry to be obliged to give the order, but we needed the ground where they stood. As we had to be economical in everything, big and little, we had planks sawn out of the trees for our use.'

"At this point another spirit interrupted the physician. 'I have lain in one of the beds made from the wood. At home I slept on a bundle of straw, and very uncomfortable it was when I was shaken by the fever. In the hospital all was different, and when I lay in my comfortable bed, I felt as if I were already in heaven.'

"'And I,' cried another broad-winged angel, 'for ten years I walked with the crutches that were made for me from the nut-tree by the Fresh Spring, and old Conrad, below on the earth, is still using them.'

"'And mine also,' another continued, 'were of the same wood. I had lain for a long time on my back; but after I got them I learned to walk with them, and they enabled me to stand before the loom, and to earn bread once more for my family. That man yonder from Hochdorf has had the same experience, and the wooden leg of William, the toll-gate keeper, who entered here shortly before me, was made of wood from the nut-tree.'

"'I owe it a debt of gratitude, too, but for an entirely different service," said a beautiful angel, as it bowed its crowned head reverently before the Son of God. 'My lot below was a very hard one. I was early left a widow, and I supported my children entirely by the work of my hands. By dint of great effort I brought them up well, and my three sons grew to be brave men who took care of themselves and helped their

mother. But all three, my Master, were lost to me, taken away by the unfathomable wisdom of the Father. Two fell in war, the third was killed by the machinery while at his work. That broke my strength, and when they brought me to the hospital, I was on the verge of despair, and life seemed a greater burden than I could bear. 'Your image, my Saviour, had just been finished by a sculptor who had carved it from the wood of the nut-tree by the Fresh Spring. They put it opposite to my bed. It represented you, my Lord, on the cross, and your head bowed in agony, with its crown of thorns, was a sorrowful sight. Yet I paid but small heed to it. One morning, however—it was the anniversary of the death of my two dear sons, who had lost their lives, fighting bravely side by side for their Fatherland—on that morning the sun fell upon your sad face, and bleeding hands pierced by the nails, and then I reflected how bitterly you had suffered, though innocent, that you might redeem us, and how your mother must have felt to lose such a child. Then a voice asked me if I had any right to complain, when the Son of God himself had willingly endured such torments for our sake, and I felt compelled to answer no, and determined then to bear patiently whatever might be laid upon me, a poor, sinful woman. Thenceforth, my Lord, was your image my consolation, and since the wood of which it was made came from the tree planted by Hannele near the Fresh Spring, I owe beyond doubt the better years that followed and the joy of being with you in paradise, my Saviour, to the nuts which that condemned woman gave to the child.'

"Humbly she bowed her head again. The Son of God turned to St. Peter, saying, 'Well, Peter?'

"The latter called to the guardians of hell: 'Let her go free, the gates of heaven are open to her. How rich and manifold, O Lord! is the fruit that springs from the smallest gift offered in true love!'

"'You are right,' answered the Saviour gently, and turned away."

The very word "Siberia" has come to have a ring of thrilling pathos. It is a comfort to learn from this picturesque story by Hugues Le Roux (translated for ROMANCE by Mary J. Safford) that the unfortunates who escape from the rigors of exile in that freezing land, have helping hands constantly extended to them. There is Christmas cheer in Siberia for even the objects of Russian hate and cruelty.

THOSE WHO MUST NOT BE SEEN.

"GUESS where I ate my Christmas dinner last year," said Constantin, passing his napkin over his light beard, to which little drops of sauce were clinging.

We knew that our friend's thoughts were in his native country, and I replied,

"Probably you were at home, devouring a splendid Christmas goose, killed on the banks of one of your Siberian rivers, which are wider than our lakes."

Constantin shook his head.

"No," said he, "I had left my family and been on my way to Europe for a week. I was travelling by sledge to Irkutsk. We had expected to reach the city on Christmas Eve, and intended to spend one night there. But the roads were bad, and the snow blinded our horses so that we were obliged to stop about seven o'clock in the evening, several versts from Irkutsk, in front of the first *isba* in a little village called Zitma, (which means Winter).

"Like nearly all of our Siberian villages, Zitma consists of a single long street. Our horses stopped of their own volition before the first streak of light that fell across the road. The darkness was so intense that, but for this ray, we perhaps should have passed the *isba*. But, roused by the glare, my driver jumped out of the sledge and knocked at the door.

"'Holloa! Is the tavern near, little uncle?' he asked, addressing a venerable moujik who appeared on the threshold, clad in a red shirt and holding a lamp in his hand.

"'Why do you seek the inn?' the old man answered. 'My house is open to the Christmas guest, and my stable to his horses.'

"'I have a traveller with me——'

"'He, too, will be welcome.'

"With these words the moujik set down his lamp, came out of the *isba*, and, approaching the sledge, politely invited me to enter his house.

"I perceived at once that our host was a well-to-do peasant, and the appearance of the *isba* confirmed this opinion.

"The building, only one story high, was divided as usual by a tolerably wide hall into two huge rooms: on the right was the *gornitza*, the apartment intended for entertainments, the room where the handsomest furniture and the copper images are kept; on the left the kitchen, which we entered.

"The moujik's wife and two daughters, who were bending over the fire, rose to bow to us, and the grandfather came down from the seat above the hearth where he had been watching the turning of the spits.

"I remember that he was a very old man, and laughed continually while shaking hands with us, like a person who is somewhat weak-minded.

"'Dounia,' said our host to his eldest daughter, 'give your place to the travellers and let them warm themselves.'

"The young girl gracefully came forward to help me take off my cloak; she wore the red *saraphane* of unmarried women, and her hair, arranged in a single braid, showed that she was not yet betrothed.

"'I wish you a husband after your own heart,' I said, as I took the wooden stool she drew up to the fire.

"Blushing deeply, she left the room. The grandfather was crouching almost at my feet. His eyes seemed to fairly devour the roasting geese. Ever and anon he glanced at me, still laughing in his aimless way.

"It really seemed as if our host had expected guests to share his Christmas banquet. His table was loaded with all the dainties which a Siberian *moujik* never

thinks of collecting except on one day in the year; first, the traditional cabbage soup, the *tschi*, then beef, then the roast geese, and, finally, cedar-nuts to grease one's tongue, the whole washed down with brandy.

"The feast had been served in the *gornitza*, opened to do us honor. There were a dozen persons at the table; my driver and I sat at the top, in the guests' place.

"I had noticed, as we entered this large room, a small table pushed close against the window. On this table were a lighted lamp, a jug of *kwass*, and a loaf of bread. Whenever a fresh dish was served, Dounia rose and placed one of the nicest portions on this table.

"My curiosity was excited, and I asked the *moujik*,

"'Is any beloved guest absent from the banquet? Or is any member of your family ill?'

"No one answered, and all eyes turned toward our host with such embarrassment that I was disconcerted. But the latter, without hesitation, answered gravely:

"'This bread, drink, and lamp stand ready every day in Christian households *for those who must not be seen.*'

"And the company continued to drink vodka and sing our national songs.

"I had not clearly understood the *moujik's* answer. So, taking advantage of a time when, in the increasing exhilaration caused by the liquor, I was not noticed, I said to my neighbor, Dounia:

"'Who are "those who must not be seen"?'

"'The *brodiadji*,—replied the young girl, putting her finger on her lips. 'The fugitives.'

"True, I had not thought of it. The village of Zitma is one of the first on the road from Niertchinsk, the location of the Kara mines where the convicts work. As this is the most cruel prison of all, hundreds make their escape every year. Of course they prefer to travel in the spring. But people cannot always choose a time to run away. They must seize the opportunity when it comes. If this happens to be in the winter, they cannot attempt to reach Europe at once, but endeavor to go a hundred leagues away, and, to obtain food and shelter, seek employment from the peasants. Besides,

from the depths of Siberia to the Ural, the *brodiadji* are forced to subsist solely upon alms; even if they had money, the inns would not be safe for them. They travel at night, alone, sure of finding along the way the lighted window which they need only push open to find the loaf and jug placed for them. People help them because it is God's will which has opened the door of escape. But they do not wish to see them, that they may not be tempted to denounce them to the soldiers who are in pursuit.

"While the young girl was giving me these particulars in an undertone, a light tap on the panes behind us made us start suddenly. Instantly, as if by magic, the songs of the revellers ceased and all eyes turned toward the little window, which, pushed from the outside, half opened. At the same moment a voice coming from the snow and the darkness said distinctly:

"'May God be with you.'

"'And with you,' the *moujik* answered. He rose, but without leaving his place, and added:

"'We expected you. Your share is served.'

"The sound of footsteps echoed on the snow, then the window creaked, opened a little wider, and a hand appeared, groped about an instant, seized the loaf and vanished.

"We had all risen, like our host. No one spoke. The grandfather still continued his senile laughter.

"The hand again appeared and grasped the jug.

"'Take it with you,' said the *moujik*, without turning his head. 'It is Christmas Eve. What more do you want?'

"'Pray for me,' said the voice.

"We heard the longdrawn sigh of a man who is drinking eagerly, and then the sound of footsteps retreating across the snow——"

Constantin paused, and sat gazing into vacancy with his eyes bent upon those distant lamps of the *moujiks* which, from the depths of Asia to the plains of Europe, shine amid the darkness of the Siberian night illumining the path of those who "must not be seen."

Here is a story for those who love to hear of the wild, wild West. It is of a miner and his "pard," and a certain Christmas Day which they kept together; and was written by Patience Stapleton. Even those who do not enjoy the miner-dialect which Bret Harte has made so famous, will find an agreeable flavor of adventure and of heroism running through this exciting tale.

A PLUM PUDDING.

Up in the Rocky Mountains, in Colorado, nine thousand feet above sea level, I struck a vein of good mineral and surveyed a claim. I built me a log cabin, and there, miles away from any human habitation, I lived alone. Far below me, like a thread, was Otto Mears's toll-road from Silverton to Ouray—a road that cost forty thousand dollars a mile. In clear weather I could see the stages whirl along this, or, like a line of flies, a mule-train pass on in single file, and sometimes, like small ants, a heavy-loaded burro-train. Them reminds me of a green feller I see, reading about a burro as was knocked off a road by a landslide. "Serves 'em right," said he, "for taking that heavy furnitoor 'way up there." He wasn't much on spelling, and didn't know a burro was the Colorado name for a donkey. The burro is the salvation of the mountain miner, for the little creatures kin walk on the picket-edge of nothing and never miss a foot, and carry a load that weighs more than they do. Far below the toll-road, the Uncapaghre, brown an' dark in the shadders and silver in the sunlight, meanders through the valley. How far down? Wall, one place on that road is a cut torn from a solid mountain wall and a look-down of nine hundred feet. It is a ticklish place, but we gets used to them things after a time.

For six months in winter I was snowed-in in my lonely cabin. I could hear the roar of the icy gales through the crashing timber, and once in a while another sound that you never forget. A fearful roar like

a monstrous wave breaking over jagged rocks and carrying with it a grand big ship; there's a jar of the airth, a snap of trees, a crunching and rumbling, and a thunder of rolling rocks, with a queer sense of moving —not where you may be, but fur off. That's a snow-slide. It begins on a mountain peak, creeping slow, a white mass, gathering more at every inch, getting tighter for a clinch, then faster, taking everything in its path, cutting a clean swath, like a scythe, then whirling, roaring, swallowing up a cabin with shrieking men, or a b'ar, hid and sleeping for the winter. Then you understand what I mean by moving, for the air is full of it, and it lasts till, with a muffled thunder-clap, the whole mass drops down into the valley miles away.

Then the summer storms, when the lightning don't seem no further off than a stone's throw, and glares and blinds and goes streaking ribbons of fire over the pines, while you're dazed and deafened by the thunder. Don't that thunder boom!—a-playing catch across the crags—the last one sending it back and all of it kinder condensed and held in canyons, and each new roar and each past one mingling together until there's a very fury of sound, like nothing else on earth.

Agin, one day you see a mount'in peak, a gray cloud kinder hovering, low, it's soft and full of crinkles and rolls like cotton batting all flung in a heap; bymeby there's a chill in the air, and the gray cloud, now the sun don't shine on it, gets black as ink. It gets closer and lower, and all of a sudden turns into a sheet of dazzling silver. Now under it is a big river coming with a rush and roar, faster than an avalanche and churning up rocks, earth, trees, animals, and men in its awful boiling current. That's a cloud burst. It swells the water in every stream in the valley, and the river beyond, where the streams empty, goes mad and rushes on over home and farm, carrying havoc and misery all along its course.

The silence up-mountain is awful. I've gone out and yelled jest for the company of an echo. Then

worse than the quiet is the sound of something walking after night. Sometimes there's a slinking four-footed creature like a monstrous yellow cat, with the slyest gait of any animal devil—that's a mountain lion. Often there's a heavier tread and a clumsy creature goes sniffling by—a grizzly; he can't be tamed, nor the little black imp of his family connection. Then again there's the sound, but when you look, there ain't nothing to make it. That's the worst of all. That's ghosts.

My mine is a tunnel a hundred feet into a mountain-side, and often towards night when I'm working I hears tap, tap, tap, soft and low, but clear as preaching. I gits out then, for them's the mine speerits and I don't wanter git 'em agin me. It's funny, ain't it? But you just live up-mountain alone and see how you feel after a while.

Twice a week a burro-train came twenty miles from Ouray for my ore, coming up a trail I made up to my mine, not three foot wide and just cut out of the rock and ground. Them, and the man with 'em, was mighty cheerful to see after days of silence. Letters? No, I never had a soul to write to me, but newspapers—a week or a month old, it didn't matter. They was comfort, and me, setting up in that cabin, forgot by all human creatures, could through them papers feel the beating heart of the great world.

Last September I got the blues so bad that I quit work one day and went down to the toll-road, timing my trip so as to see the stage pass and to git from some passenger something to read. A feller give me a book called "Dombey and Son" one day. Gosh! them old sea-faring fellers was the gamest crowd I ever see. Cuttle's my choice. I know the book by heart, and Florence and Walter, and that shop and Soll Gills is jest as nateral as if I hed knowed 'em. Why, I set and read that over so much, seemed like I could jest see 'em come inter life, an be real folks in the firelight. Like to know Dickens, the feller that wrote 'em. Dead, is he? Wal, wal, he'll never know what a comfort he was to me. When I git the charnce, I'm going to lay a

wreath of posies where he is planted and tell him them books he's writ has been more'n a gospel to us miners in the mount'ins, and I'll say I come clear from one o' the newest states in the new world to give him my humble thanks.

Where was I? Oh, on the toll-road. I set there and smoked my pipe, looking down the gulch on the Uncapaghre sparkling like a silver cord fur below, and listening to the wind whispering through the pines, and then I heard a sound. The road is so sun-dried and hard it echoes. This was a sorter pattering, and wa'n't no shod creature either. It can't be a mount'in lion, I says to myself, he wouldn't dare be here. I felt for my gun —revolver, you know—and then I see this was a dorg. A Gordon setter, and a thoroughbred. White-and-black, with the humanest eyes I ever see in a animal. I called him, and after a survey he come and seemed friendly enough. He was footsore and lean, and looked like he'd come a long way. I picked a cactus-thorn out of his paw, and wa'n't he grateful? I kept a watch 'round a turn of the ground for his owner, and pretty soon I see four burros, heavy-loaded, and walking behind them a youngish feller. He was tall and broad-shouldered, dressed like the most of us in rough clothes, woolen shirt, sombrero and long boots. He was bronzed some, had curly hair, pleasant blue eyes and a straggling mustache trying hard to cover a mouth pretty as a woman's.

"Good day," he says, halting the pack animals. "Thanks for helping the dog. It was careless in me not to look when he limped."

"Howdy," I says, looking him over. "Stranger in these parts?"

"England," he answers, setting down on a rock and mopping his forehead.

"Miner?"

"Going to be. By the way, am I anywhere near the claim of a man named Day?"

"You be," I says cautious, "near Bige Day's tunnel. It's up that trail."

"You must know him?"

"Sum'at. Do you?"

"No, the claim I have purchased of General Raymond, of Denver, is a half-mile further up the mountain than his."

"Poker Sam," I gasps, and mebbe I swore some, for the young feller looked sorter s'prised. "That's his old gag, sends 'em here, mentions my name and gits me inter his schemes. Stranger, last month there was seven men I'd never set eyes on afore travelling up that trail on the lookout for Bige Day's claim. They come different ways and times, and swore in diff'rent langwidges, but all was directed by General Raymond—where he got the General he don't know hisself—and had all bought claims of him. I answered 'em civil at first, but my dander got up, and I took the last one—a slim fellow from New York—and I says: 'See that speck up there, that p'int a half-mile up mount'in—wal, that's it. If you don't keer for yer life an has good legs you might reach it alive. If you've breath left then, you kin diskiver a tunnel six foot inter the mount'in, and rock, all the rock you want, but there never was, nor never will be, any streaks of pay-dirt there, and no way of gitting it down if there was. Some of her secrets this old mount'in won't give up, and where a human gits over-bold in climbing up and trying to find out, why she jest shets down on him at the start.' Poker Sam played you for a sucker"—I looked him over—"and I guess you was easy to play."

"Possibly," he says carelessly. He drawed out a cigar and give me one. He set back then smoking coolly, his hat sider him and the little rings of hair curling round his forehead. I chewed my cigar awhile to git the taste.

"Busted?" I asks.

"In the vernacular of the country, just that," he laughs.

"Rich folks mebbe?"

"Haven't a soul to care whether I live or die." He looked kinder far away then, and I would bet agin

heavy odds that there was a gal concerned in it. I took a big shine to the feller, and after a while I offered him a job up to my mine, to work on shares, him to throw in the grub-stake he had with him. He was willing enough, so from that day Ed—that's name enough, for a story—and me was pards. Folks used to call me "groundhog Bige," and they nicknamed him, "English Ed," but I usually called him "Pard." Get along? You bet. I was a ignorant, old creature and he was college-larned, but that wasn't no diff'rence; he was friendly to me as to a chum of his own class, mebbe more so, for when I got rheumatics, he was off to Ouray —and cold, too—to git linnerment, and played the nurse complete. He was lots of company, and so was the dorg —Doc was the pup's name. Pard took just as much int'rest in Cuttle and Gills as me, and got more books; one about the gamest old feller, Pickwick, and the eating and drinking in that volume would make your mouth water. We read him whilst we eat pork and biscuit and drunk coffee 'thout no milk nor sugar. We was doing well in the mine, but when you think of the ways vittles has to be brought on the backs of them burros, you aint't setting up for entrys—as Ed used to say. He was a cheerful feller, but given to fits of gloom—never said a word about his folks though.

'Bout Chris'mus time, and we wa'n't so snowed in by then but that you could git along on snowshoes, we was reading Pickwick over agin. He read aloud in diff'rent voices, making it jest as real as live folks a-talking, when I says sudden: "I'll do it by gosh!"

"What?" He kinder jumped, and the pup riz up and licked my hand.

"Why," says I, "I'll hoof it to Ouray and lay in a chicken—a turkey if I can git it, pertaters, and a squash, and cranberries and the truck to make a plum pudding. I'll celebrate. I can't hear of them Dickens' fellers eating no more and try to fill myself up on salt horse and slops. I'll git one good feed if it takes a leg or costs a life."

"It will be the latter," he says, sober enough; "you

couldn't make a walking market of yourself over three feet of snow on the edge of a precipice."

"I'm light and easy on snow shoes."

"But," he interrupts, "what's the matter with my going?"

"You ain't," I answers, bringing to mind his attempts to walk on snowshoes and his wabblings, "you ain't no bird on 'em, Pard."

He laughed then like a boy.

"It's a deal," I says, "and termorrer, the 24th, I'll set off early and git back by night and we'll set up and eat till morning. I'll git brandy for the pudding sass, but Pard," I finishes anxious, "how is them puddings made?"

"Why, flour, raisins, lard or butter—something that's rich——"

"Butter," I puts in, "is eighty cents a pound at Ouray, and I guess that's rich enough."

"Butter, currants, molasses to make it brown, and spice mixed and cooked."

"I cal'late I'll get it mixed to the store," I says, "and my travelling will beat it up."

"Then you sew it up in a bag which you boil, and make a sauce of brandy that you pour over and set afire, and it burns blue flame. This is the way we used to have it at home." His face grew sad, and I knew he was going inter them glooms agin.

"Waste of good liquor," I says under my breath, but he didn't note me.

I set out early the next morning, leaving him and the pup at home. It wasn't bad going and the air was fresh and full of sunshine. They was s'prised to see me at Ouray, and laughed a deal at the truck I bought and paid for with gold dust. I found the pudding stuff so heavy that I really had it mixed in a pail. I went over to a saloon for awhile, and it was 'bout three in the afternoon when I come back for my things. I had asked the storekeeper, who was also postmaster, if there were any letters for Pard, but there wa'n't. I tied the eight-pound turkey 'round my neck with the pud-

ding-pail, the vegetables and a squash—that seemed to weigh a ton before I was four miles on my way. I filled my pockets with papers and books, and a bottle of brandy and tobacco. As I fixed my snowshoes, the storekeeper came out.

"Queer thing, Bige," he says; "'bout an hour 'fore you got back from the saloon an Englishman named Ingalls was here arsking if I knowed your pard, Ed. I told him where he was and off he goes. Impatient and stuck up enough, wouldn't listen to no caution. Thought mebbe our mount'in trail was a bolerward where he could find hoss-keers and them two-wheeled cabs with a jay up behind. Off he jumps like a flash. I says, 'Try it, young feller, you'll be back in an hour or two.' I clean forgot all about you was going that way."

"I'll meet him," I says and starts. The crowd give three cheers for me, and wished me a "Merry Chris'-mus!" "Keep some of that pudding for me till spring, it will be hard enough," yells the storekeeper, "for you wouldn't take no soda in it." Pard hadn't mentioned soda and I wouldn't put it in, though it was argued it oughter be done. "S'long!" I calls and goes on. For three or four miles I could see tracks quite plain in the snow and I kept a look-out for Ingalls, but my progress was awful slow. I was so beat out that I swore at the vittles, Pard and Chris'mus straight along. The turkey growed heavier and heavier, and once I lost it and had to go back a half-mile. I wa'n't a likely pictur as I floundered along, and was ugly enough to fight my best friend. Curious enough I put all my mad on that feller ahead. "The idee," I'd say, "of him daring to climb this mount'in alone in snow-time."

'Bout ten miles on my way, just as I was straight'n-ing up my back after making another hitch on the turkey, I felt something sharp strike my face. I knowed I was in for it, for snow at Chris'mus time in these mount'ins means darkness, drifts, and death. But that didn't stump me. Every inch of that road was plain as a map in my mind, and blunted by cold, stunned by the snow and darkness, I forgot Ingalls entirely and

must have passed close by him. I had enough to do to fight for my own life. On I goes, and game enough to hang to the truck; I wa'n't going to be beat outer that dinner for all the snow in Colorado. Every now and then when I got kinder sleepy and a sly idee kep coming, how slick it would be to lie down and take a nap—that means never git up but freeze to death—the old turkey would sling around and fetch me a smart slap in the face. I kinder growed to think the old bird wanted to be roasted, and git up to the cabin to give his remains for the celebration.

I got along all right till I got to where I ought to turn off to the trail and there I dassent leave the road. I wasn't sure where it lay. I listened and I heard the muffled sound of a gun, and this I follered, wondering where Pard got his sense. I stumbled up the mount'inside a-hollering, and soon I got a answer and the happiest sight of my life—I see a big yaller glare. It was Pard a-burning kerosene.

"Glad it's cheap," I says ironical, for it ain't. He laughs and takes all the truck, and flounders on ahead a distance where, by the howling, I knowed Doc was tied, and then the house was all lit up.

"Made three stations down the path," he explains, "house first, dog next, myself with the gun and bonfire last."

"You'll do," I says. He flew around looking at the stuff I'd brought, found some cloth and made a bag into which he put the pudding mixture, tied it, and slung the same into a kittle of boiling water which he hung over the fire.

"The water'll git in it," I says, "them stitches is too loose."

"It cooks out," he answers, beginning to cut up the squash, "now sit down, Bige, and get straightened out," he goes on, bringing me a glass of brandy.

"I arsked for a letter for ye, but there wa'n't none," I says, beginning to draw off my boots.

"You were very kind, but there is no one to write."

"Land of the living!" I yells, jumping up, "them

tracks ahead—that feller." It come to me all of a sudden, where was he?

"What did you say?" asks Pard, keerless like.

"Ingalls," I gasps.

"Ingalls," he repeats, gitting white, "for pity's sake who—what do you know of him?"

I told him. He listened quite a minit, then goes to where his coat was hanging on a nail.

"Where are you going?" I says.

"To look for him."

"Why? What's he to you?"

"My worst enemy."

"Pard, you're a fool. If me, an old mount'ineer, hed a hard fight for life a half-hour ago, what will it be for you? and the storm is worse. The feller's dead now, any how. Mebbe he went back—sure he did, and you don't budge a step."

"You are sure he did not go back," he says quietly, lighting the lantern. "Let go, Day, I mean to start."

"You're so smart on snowshoes, you'll git about a mile and then tumble over a precipice."

"I think not," he says soberly; "if I do, it don't matter."

"Well, I'm not going."

"I wouldn't let you," says he.

"Oh, you wouldn't," I growls, "you wouldn't hey. You young whipper-snapper, you cub, you. Let me go. I'll jest let you know you don't stir a foot out till I git fixed. Here you are starting off with a lantern and a dorg, no brandy, no rope, nothing."

"The dorg will scent him."

"The dorg will be snowed in forty rods from the house, and a dead dorg in forty minits if we don't kerry him."

He hung his head. "I don't want you to risk your life," he stammers.

"Ed," I says, "you are all the thing I have in this world to keer for. If I'd a son, I couldn't love him more'n you. Come."

We left the dorg in the cabin, with food where he

might git at it if we didn't come back, and I was pretty sure he'd break the winder and git out if we were long away. Pard fixed a candle in the winder and put logs on the fire, and then we set out. I had the lantern tied on my back, and had made a rope fast to Pard.

The night was jest like a curtain of black velvet, and absolutely still. The air was thick and wet and stupefying. So we goes on. The snow being damp had packed some, and that kep' us in the trail, but it was hard work, and I was already wore out. At last we tumbles inter the road and stops a minit.

"He never got as fur as this," I says, "and I'd better go on alone. You stay here and I'll shoot when I find him." For answer Pard ketches my lantern.

"If it's death to one of us, it shall come to me," he says. "You stay here, I'll go."

He'd cut the rope that bound us and was off inter the dark. I knowed one of us must have sense, and if we lost that little trail up mountain, we was done fur, so I waited. I yelled to him to try and keep inside from the edge of the road; but I doubt if he heard, the air was so deadened. The time I waited seemed years. I made fast the rope to a tree near the trail, and kept one end of it and made trips down as fur as I could where he went, but dassent let go. Bymeby I was so sleepy and numbed I thought I dreamt it, when I see a faint, ghostly light a-coming awful slow, and something big behind the light.

"I've got him," says Ed, panting. "I fell across him in the snow about four miles down. I think he is dead."

He had him on his back, and luckily the stranger was a small, slight chap, but as it was, it was awful. We took him between us—there was no time to try to bring him to life, for the storm was thicker every minute—but we tackled the brandy ourselves and then started. I never see sich strength as that Pard of mine had. He held most of the feller, and didn't seem to touch airth at all—in fact, the last of the way he dragged me. We was pretty near beat out when we heard Doc's howl; that put new life in us, and soon the light

from the little cabin showed faint but stiddy. The candle we found nearly flickering out, but the fire on the hearth was burning bright. The pup went crazy over the stranger.

"Knew him in England," says Ed, working away at the chap's boots. We got him undressed, and rubbed him with snow and poured brandy into his clenched teeth. After an hour or so of this we could see him breathe, and this encouraged us for new efforts. Tired? We were nearly dead, and if the stranger had any skin left on him, he was in luck. Bymeby he opens his eyes. "What did you wake me up for?" he says crossly, and drifts off inter a sleep.

"That's him," says Ed bitterly, "he's a natural kicker."

"Who is he?" I asks after we had made ourselves comfortable—Pard was fixing the fire.

"The pudding ain't spoiled," he mutters, "though the water nearly boiled out of the kettle. We'll have the dinner, after all. He? Oh, he's Larry Ingalls. He and I were orphans distantly related to Sir John Webster of—well somewhere. Sir John brought us up. Larry was a rich orphan. I was a poor one, and Sir John had a daughter——"

"I cal'lated there was a young woman in the case," I says.

"Lady Maud. She was a sister to us both when we were youngsters, but when we were grown, I fell in love with her and so did Larry, who always did as I did. We had a bitter quarrel, he and I, and I told him Lady Maud loved me, and he, the cur, went and explained everything to her father. I was ordered out of the house and came here, that's all. I don't know what Ingalls wants of me. I suppose he came to tell me he had married Lady Maud."

'Bout noon the next day I got up and fixed the turkey to roast and the vegetables, and set the pudding back over the fire. Somehow, though it had a shape and was hard, I didn't feel much confidence in it. Ed was lying in a corner jest wore out. While I was a-fussing

round, I see the new feller looking at me. "Where am I?" he asks. I told him, and said who saved his life at the risk of his own, and hinted that I didn't think the life of a mean feller was worth saving, and such had better go back where they come from.

"But you don't know all," he says wistful, his eyes full of tears. "Ed and I did quarrel, but I did not tell Sir John."

"Oh, you didn't," I sneers, "likely story."

"Lady Maud did, she told her father that she loved Ed and she wanted to marry him. She is that kind of a girl. She never had a secret from him. Of course he was angry and turned Ed out. I was mean enough to be glad at first, for I knew her father would give Maud to me, but she grew so thin and unhappy, and took such a dislike to me, that I was sorry enough for the whole affair. I tried then to find Ed, I give you my word I did, and then an Uncle came from Australia, that Ed used to brag about when he was a child and say he would bring back a trunk full of gold. Well, he really did come back with lots of money, and he and Sir John are great friends now. He is a sick man, or he would have come to America with me. I came for Lady Maud's sake. She said, if I would find Ed, she would give me the old sisterly affection. I told her I would be a Knight of the Round Table and find the Holy Grail—a cup, you know."

"Oh," I says, "sorter prize winner, eh?"

"Though that is a comical comparison for Ed, who looks like a rough. I have been watching him, but women generally like big, stupid bears."

"Thank you,'" says Ed, gitting up, "I didn't save your miserable life to be abused. Lucky for you, you were a little fellow, or you wouldn't be here."

"Game, though," I puts in, "the grit of him, starting alone up these mount'ins."

Ed and him looked at each other then like two animals 'bout to fight, then I seen 'em lock hands and I knowed their eyes was dim.

"I brought you her photograph. She sent it," says

Ingalls, hunting around, "but—but I must have lost it."

"Here 'tis," I says, "it dropped outer your coat last night and I set it by the fire to dry." The heat and wet had mussed it so you couldn't tell what the picter was.

"Too bad," sighs Ingalls. "I meant to give it to you. I brought it all the way."

"I carry her face in my heart," laughs Ed, and then he fell to singing:

> "Come into the garden, Maud,
> For the black bat, night, has flown,
> Come into the garden, Maud,
> I am here at the gate alone;"

While Pard was setting the table, Ingalls, who had all our bedding piled on him, crawled out and got on his clothes.

"You live high for miners," he says.

"This is Christmas day," says Ed, and then they shook hands agin. "The dear old day, Larry, and we'll spend next Christmas at home, and Lady Maud, my wife, Larry—don't that make you hate me?—will welcome you under the mistletoe. Perhaps I'll let you kiss her then."

"She is my sister," answers the other, not a bit of meanness left in him, "and the world is full of fair women. Is it not so, Mr. Day?"

"They don't trouble me none," I says, "but, Pard, look at this pudding." He crossed the room still a-singing:

> "My heart would hear her and beat
> Were it earth in an earthy bed."

"He never could carry a tune," grins Larry.

Ed turned the water outer the kittle and ripped open the bag. A round, warty-looking thing, like a small cannon-ball, and pretty near as hard, rolled out. It was a grayish color, specked with raisins, and as vicious-appearing a compound as I ever see. "The plum pud-

ding of old England," sings Ingalls, and then we roared with laughter. But the turkey, roasted in an oven sider the fire, was good and the vegetables splendid, and the young fellers was the best company I ever see, and you kin bet the dorg didn't go hungry. He was Lady Maud's pup, and Ed had brought him clear from England. That was the jolliest meal I ever eat, and it was as good as sunshine to see them two, friends now and forever.

Where am I going now? Oh, down to something hall, where Pard lives with his uncle and Lady Maud. Of course Ed married her. Sir John and Ingalls, who, Pard wrote, has got a gal of his own, is going to be there. I've sold the mine for a good sum, and I'm carrying Ed his share; queer, though, Ingalls would have never found Ed but for Poker Sam, so the old villain did a good turn once, not knowing it. Yes, I'm pretty well fixed, rich enough to drink champagne out of a pail—which is Western—and I'm going to spend the Christmas holidays with Pard. I've brought the dorg 'way across the ocean with me to show to Lady Maud. I forgot to tell you that, when the young fellers went away, the pup wouldn't quit me and is mine now. We'll probably have a good dinner Christmas day, but the vittles won't taste no better, nor the crowd be no merrier than it was last year in Colorado, in the Rockies, nine thousand feet above the sea. About the plum pudding, wal—I have nothing to say. That subject's a tender one 'twixt Pard and me.

This pathetic picture of a Christmas in prison, celebrated with all the sweet Provençal ceremonies, is from the pen of Alphonse Daudet, and is translated for ROMANCE by Mary Clark Spaulding.

SALVETTE AND BERNADON.

I.

It is the day before Christmas in a large city in Bavaria. Through the streets white with snow, amid the tumult of the storm and the noise of the carriages and clocks, the crowd hastens joyously to the bake-shops or booths, or else to gaze in the store-windows.

Some branches of green holly and pines, entirely covered with pendants, graze with a light rustling the stores decorated with ribbons and flowers, and rise above one's head like a shadow of the Thuringian forest—a reminder of nature amid the ice and snow of winter. The night falls. In the distance behind the gardens of the Residence one can still see the rays of the setting sun gleaming over the snow. There is throughout the city so much gayety and so many preparations for festivities that each light which shines from the windows seems to be suspended from a Christmas tree. For to-day is not an ordinary Christmas. We are in the year of our Lord 1870, and the birth of Christ is not the only reason for drinking the famous Von der Thau, and celebrating the triumphs of the Bavarian warriors.

Christmas! Christmas!

Even the Jews in the lower part of the city are celebrating.

It is the old Augustus Cahn who hurries along and turns the corner of the Grappe Bleue. Never did the eyes of a ferret gleam as did his on this evening. Attached to his worn-out sleeve by wallet-cords is a modest little basket, filled to the brim, and covered

with a brown napkin, through which appears the neck of a bottle and a branch of holly.

What in the world does the old money-lender intend to do with all these things? Is it possible that he intends to celebrate Christmas? Does he intend to have a reunion of his friends to drink to his country, Germany?

But no—— Every one knows well that the aged Cahn has no country. His "Vaterland" is his strong-box. He no longer cares for his family or his friends—for no one but his debtors. His sons, or rather his associates, departed three months before with the army. Down behind the cook's quarters of the Prussian army they traffic, selling brandy, buying watches, going forth the night after a battle to search the pockets of the dead and to rip open the sacks which have fallen in the ditches along the road.

Too old to follow his children, the father Cahn remains in Bavaria, and makes great bargains with the French prisoners. He is always prowling about some of the barracks, and it is he who buys the watches, epaulets, medals or anything of value within the post. One can often see him slipping into the hospitals in the ambulances. He approaches the bedside of the wounded, and in a low voice asks them with his hideous accent, "Have you anything to sell?"

And the reason he is hastening with his basket under his arm at this moment is because there are two Frenchmen awaiting him, high up in that tall black building with narrow grated windows, where Christmas has nothing for an illumination excepting the dim lights placed by the beds of the dying.

II.

These two Frenchmen are called Salvette and Bernadon. They are two infantry-men, two Provençals from the same village, enrolled in the same regiment, and wounded by the same shell. But Salvette has the stronger constitution, and already is beginning to recuperate and to walk from his bed to the window. Ber-

nadon, alas!—will never recover. Within the white curtains of his hospital bed, his face seems paler and thinner every day, and when he speaks of his country and return home, it is with that sad smile of the sick, who feel more resignation than hope. To-day, indeed, he is a little more animated, in thinking of that beautiful fête of Christmas, which in Provence resembles a large bon-fire in the midst of winter. He recalls the departures for the midnight mass, the village streets, dark and full of people. Then he seems to see the long vigil around the table, the traditional three tapers, the edible snails and the pretty ceremony of "cacho fio," when the grandfather walks around the house sprinkling the boiled wine.

"Ah, my poor Salvette! What a sad Christmas we are going to have this year! If we only had some money to pay for a little white bread and a bottle of claret! It would give me so much pleasure to sprinkle once again with you the 'cacho fio!'" And in speaking of white bread and claret the eyes of the sick one grow brilliant.

But what can they do? They have nothing, these unfortunate ones—neither money nor watches. For a long time Salvette has concealed within the lining of his vest a post-office order of forty francs. But this is only for the day when they shall be liberated, and for the first halt they will make at a public house in France.

That money is sacred! By no means must it be touched. . . . Yet how sick Bernadon is! Who knows if he will ever recover and return home again?—and, after all, what a beautiful Christmas they might have together! Would it not be worth while to celebrate it?

Without saying a word to his friend, Salvette ripped open his jacket and took out the post-office order. When the aged Cahn came in the morning as was his custom to make a tour of the halls, after long debates and discussions in a low voice, Salvette slipped in his hand the square of paper, stiffened and yellowed, smelling of powder and stained with blood.

From that moment Salvette assumed a mysterious air. He clapped his hands and laughed to himself when he looked at Bernadon. . . . And now, as night falls, he is watching with his forehead pressed against the window until he sees, from his deserted post, the old Augustus Cahn arrive in the storm with a little basket on his arm.

III.

The solemn midnight hour which sounds from all the clocks of the city falls dismally on the chamber of the sick.

The hall of the hospital is silent, lighted only by the night-lamps suspended from the ceiling. Large, roving shadows float over the beds and the bare walls, with a constant motion like the heavy breathing of the sick ones lying there.

For a moment some one will talk in his sleep or else groan with the nightmare, while from the streets rises a faint murmur of footsteps and voices, blended together in the cold and echoing night, as under the porch of a cathedral.

"Are you asleep, Bernadon?"

Very nicely, upon the little table, by his friend's bedside, Salvette had placed a bottle of wine from Lunel, a piece of round bread, and some pretty Christmas bread, with a piece of holly at its right.

The wounded one opens his heavy eyes, around which the fever has traced dark circles. In the indistinct light of the night-lamps, and under the white reflection of the high roofs which the moon lights up in the snow, this improvised Christmas seems to him fantastic.

"Come! Wake up, my friend! It shall not be said that two Provençals passed Christmas eve without sprinkling some claret."

Salvette helps him to sit up in bed, with all the tenderness of a mother. He fills the glasses and cuts the bread, and they drink to each other's health and say the wine must have come from Provence.

Little by little Bernadon becomes animated and interested. The white wine—the recollections——

With that childishness which sick people often have at the end of an illness, he asks Salvette to sing him a Provençal Christmas Carol.

His friend would like nothing better.

"Which do you prefer? The song of the 'Hote,' or the 'Three Kings,' or 'Saint Joseph'?"

"No. I prefer 'The Shepherds.' We always sing that at our house."

"Then it shall be 'The Shepherds.'"

In a low tone, his head within the curtains, Salvette begins to sing. Suddenly, at the last couplet, when the shepherds, coming to see Jesus in the stable, have placed their offering of fresh eggs and cheese on his cradle, and are doing Him reverence,

> "Jesus says to them:
> 'Go on! Arise!
> Return ye home and be very wise.
> Shepherds, take your leave,'"

behold, poor Bernadon slips and falls heavily upon the pillow. His comrade, thinking he is asleep, calls him and attempts to move him. But the wounded one lies immovable, and the little branch of holly falls across his rigid figure, like the green palm they place beside the dead.

Salvette comprehends all.

Then weeping and filled with deep emotion by the fête and by his great grief, in the silence of the hospital, he sings in a loud voice that joyous refrain from Provence:

> "Shepherds, take your leave."

Those who have never attended an old-fashioned "protracted meeting" in the South will have an opportunity to do so in reading the following skilful sketch, written by Martha McCullough Williams for ROMANCE. And the love-story is perhaps as natural a feature of the gathering as is any other.

HOW JULY ANN "CAME THROUGH."

AN August world, full of glow and greenery. Two men ride through it along a broad white highway, inches deep in dust. One rider is white-headed, the other barely in his twenties. Both are well mounted, and better dressed than the casual rural traveller.

Each carries a pair of saddle-bags, puffy with garments at the one end, the other so flatly solid as to suggest books within. The elder of them is stout enough to roll a bit in his saddle; the younger sits erect and lightly swaying, the model of a perfect horseman. On either hand, cleared land, criss-crossed with crooked fences which cut it into many small fields, runs away to a far woodland sky-line, rimmed with round, swelling hills. Fresh yellow stubble covers many of the fields. Others glisten with broad tobacco-leaves or bristle with corn just past "roasting-ear."

In one of these a man in shirt and trousers is pulling fodder as though life depended on it. At the sound of hoofs he turns to face the road, peers sharply from under his big straw hat, and says half aloud, "Jest as I s'pected—them Philistine preachers is 'pon ye, Samson,—presidin-elder an' circuit-rider too!" Then, drawing up to the fence and resting both arms on it: "Evenin', evenin', gentle*men!* What's the good word with yer?"

"The best word of all,—God is with us," the elder says, reaching a plump hand toward the horny, stained fingers that meet it rather reluctantly. The younger answered, with a flush all over his handsome, boyish

face, "How are you, Brother Wade, and how are—all your family?"

Samson Wade eyes him keenly for half-a-breath; then he says, with a grim smile, "My fam'ly is well enough ter be wuth taken keer on, an' I'm a-rasslin' ter do it single-handed an' alone. Won't yer two ride on ter the house an' 'light, an' git er bite ter eat? We ain't got no great things, but sech as 'tis, ye're welcome."

The elder looks at the low sun.

"I'm afraid not," he says; "that is, unless you're going to hear us preach to-night, and so have early supper. The church is quite five miles off, and we begin at early candle-light."

Samson Wade laughed aloud.

"Bro' Clark, yer do tickle me!" he says between gasps. "Why, don't ye know that, ef I went, yer an' Henry Manly thar might preach and pray and shout yourselves ter shoe-strings, an' not get no show at all with the congregation? Er circus, with blue monkeys an' red elephunts, wouldn't make Bush Creek folks gape and stare more'n Sams' Wade at night meetin', in the Amen corner a-raidin' of the chunes,—an' that's jest whar I'd be bound ter set."

"Just you try it,—we are mighty willing to risk it," Elder Clark answers, rippling all through with a smothered laugh. Wade shakes his head.

"No. Yer know how I pray, 'Good Lord, good devil,'—dun know which I'll have ter deal with herearter—but ef I trained on the Lord's side, I'd be 'shamed ter go feeshin' arter souls in little fag-eends o' time. I'd put in a whole day's work fer 'em—an' sleep sound arter hit."

"Is that your objection to night services?"

Manly speaks this time, and there is a curious undertremor in his voice.

"Jes only partly. Fact is, thar's mo' devilment carried on thar 'an' ye can shake er stick at all day long. Why, don't yer remember the revival last year? One night when you wus all a-hallelujah-in' up the altar,

an' t'other folks all stan'in' on the benches ter see, 'Lias Toby knocked deaf ole Tom Nolan down, an' next night er whole passel on 'em put er skeer-face an' spectacles on ole Miss Shepherd's bull-yearlin', an' tied him fast in the pulpit, whar the crowd found 'im, out-bellerin' er whole conference, much more one preacher."

"No, no, we have not forgotten. We want to persuade the young fellows into a better way of life, and older men like you can help us a great deal," Elder Clark breaks in. Then, after a breath, "I have no wish to seem impertinent, Brother Wade, but it's an awful responsibility, to come between a burdened soul and its Saviour."

"Humph! Thought ye'd fetch round ter it arter a while,—knowed that was at the bottom when I seen you two come lippin' erlong my way. Now lemme tell ye. I ain't got but the one gal, July Ann, an' from the day she wus born, up ter now, she ain't gin me no trouble out er the ordinary. Sunday I took her an' her mammy ter hear ye preach. Basket-meetin' is eenabout the bes' sort er picnic,—an all-by-daylight, respectable affair. I hearn yo' sermonts—an' I ain't got er word ter say agin um—but arterward, you let ole McPounder loose in the altar, er roarin' an' chargin' an' ripsnortin',—tellin' sinners how they wus hair-hung an' breeze-shaken over the gulf er brimstone blue-blazes, an' skeerin' that pore child o' mine, that's better'n a whole churchful er Christians, into believin' she is guilty o' the unpardonable sin,—because she's sebenteen years old, an' ain't never even been ter the mourners' bench. An' when she knelt with them that wanted ter be prayed for, thar come that flauntin' Sally Sanders that gits er new religion every summer an' dainces hit erway every Chrismus, ter talk ter 'er an' guide 'er in the way she should go. 'T wus that turned my gorge. I jest ups an' takes my fambly home,—an' I ain't had a day's peace in the three sence then. July Ann ain't said nothin'—jest creeps erbout white an' trembly, not eatin' enough ter feed er sparrer—but I've

hearn it from her mammy. She 'cum of Methodis' folks—an' ye can't persuade 'er that salvation grows anywhar' but inside the wall o' Carmel meetin'-house, —an' mornin' noon an' night she's been at me, 'Go ter night-meetin', go ter night-meetin'.'"

Elder Clark smiles, and then grows grave again.

"How can you, an earthly father," he says, "so love and care for your child, yet hold her away from a heavenly Father's loving-kindness?"

A minute of uneasy silence. Wade shifts from one foot to the other, then vaults over the fence, saying, "Argufyin' with ye is hotter work 'en pullin' fodder. Come on, yer two, an' I'll go with ye, an' take July Ann to night-meetin'—but if ole McPounder gits loose ergin, thar's no tellin' whut I'll do."

. . . . . .

Carmel church at early candle-light. A raw, square, half-finished wooden building, set in an unfenced grove of tall oaks, beside the white highway. People come to it in swarms. One horse in three carries double or treble. Stout farm-wagons are packed full; buggies and carriages, fairly crowded. In this stagnant rural life, protracted meeting is an event. It begins o' Saturday; has two daylight services Sunday; after that, night-meeting for one week, or two or three, if there is enough of an outpouring of the spirit to constitute a revival. Everybody comes to it. Here is a great-grandfather, white-haired, bent and tremulous; there, a baby in arms, cooing or crying sleepily against its mother's shoulder. Inside, candles in wooden sconces glimmer smokily, revealing staring white walls; row upon row of benches, guiltless alike of paint or cushion; a narrow, upright box-pulpit; in front of it, the altar-space, knee-deep in clean, bright straw. Men and women sit rigidly apart, the one to the right, the other to the left. The women's "Amen-corner" is packed to suffocation with the mothers in Israel, who are the mainstay of the church. A few are stern and withered, the better part, ponderously rosy. In gowns they run

to purple calico, black stuff, or sober-figured lawns. Many hide their countenances in caverns of sun-bonnets, matching their gowns. If straw and ribbons appear, be sure they are years and years out of fashion.

Against such a background Sally Sanders shows in startling relief. Beyond question she is a beauty, tall and round, with wide blue eyes, apple-blossom skin, and hair yellow and olive-looking as new cornsilk. Her light-blue muslin gown falls away from a white throat, about which glitters a double row of shell beads. She has pale-pink bows at breast and waist; a trifle of lace and pink rosebuds rest lightly on her hair; her white, gloveless fingers glitter with showy rings; and a small, pink-stockinged foot, in a high-heeled blue slipper, shows at the edge of her much-ruffled skirt.

Sally has a good voice—and some knowledge of how to use it. Since Henry Manly came to the circuit last fall, she has never missed an appointment or failed to "raise the tune." Though she is some years older than the handsome young preacher, it has been matter of church gossip since Christmas that he was "plumb distracted" about her, and only waiting to be passed to elder's orders before making her his wife. It would be very well for him, as everybody admits. He has a little property—not enough to supplement his meagre salary. Sally's father is more than well-to-do, and she is his only child. Marriage with her means for Henry independence, advancement, a possible bishopric,—advantages quite solid enough to counterbalance the fact that since she was fifteen her bold flirtations have been the talk of the country-side,—especially that affair with Nate Pegram, who more than once swore publicly, "Sally shan't never marry nobody but me."

Nate disappeared, though, two years before young Manly came on the scene—some said that he was dead,—and nobody has been officious enough to tell the circuit-rider of the old lover or his threats,—not even that honest skeptic Samson Wade, who has grown to have quite a liking for the bright lad, through his pastoral visits to the unbeliever's wife. July Ann, daughter of

the house, was then away at boarding-school. Before her home-coming in early June, Sally Sanders's engagement to the circuit-rider was accepted everywhere as a matter of fact. In some way, however, July Ann did not hear of it.

She is the merest slip of a thing,—slim, upright, with dark, appealing eyes, like those of a captive bird, and a fine red flushing through the olive of her cheek. Her two brothers were almost men when she was born, so that she has grown up the apple of her father's eye, and rarely allowed out of his sight, until, with a mighty wrench of heart-strings, he sent her away to school. Always shy and dainty, she has come back from it a jewel of the first water, at least in her father's doting eyes. But he holds her still too much a child to think of danger for her in association with young Manly. The usual thing comes of it. There are blushes, tremors, stolen glances, broken half-words, eloquent silences, —Love's young dream, in fact, set to Wesley's hymns and the Acts of the Apostles. A careless word shatters it. On Sunday, the force of Brother McPounder's exhortation served to drown and cover many a pretty piece of gossip. Mrs. Wade sat with July Ann at the back of the Amen-corner, with Sister Sanders on the girl's other hand. When the excitement rose to fever-heat, with Sally cooing and fluttering among the mourners, her mother leaned across to say, "Ef Sally's fitten fer anything, 'tis bein' er preacher's wife. I sh'll tell Henry when they marry he won't need no Aaron. He has got *her* ter he'p hold up 'is hands."

"When they marry!" July Ann sinks to her knees, and hides her face in her mother's lap. She remembers nothing else save the confused noise of prayer and singing and groaning sobs till her father takes her forcibly away. Since then she has been at war with heaven, earth, life—most of all her own heart. For has she not given it unsought—at least in words—and does it not still throb and ache, and cling to the traitor it should despise?—Doubly a traitor—for has he not tried in this ride through the soft, scented dusk to hark

back to the old ground—and when she fenced away, did he not declare outright, "I love you?" How she ought to hate, loathe, despise him, thus to presume on her weakness. Even more so herself, hypocrite that she is, masking heart-break for her lover as concern for her soul's salvation!

She sits white, breathless, with dry, wide eyes, through the sermon, thrilled, in spite of everything, by Henry's voice,—it seems so instinct with love—love divine, which he pleads, oh, so earnestly, that his fellow-creatures shall not turn grieving away! No drop of it, though, soothes her burning pain or softens the wan hopelessness of her face.

"July Ann's deeply convicted," Sister Whimper whispers to Sister Dawdle.

Sally gives her one compassionate glance, then turns her flower-face to the pulpit, as the sun-flower turns to her god.

When Henry Manly sinks breathless and trembling to his seat and Elder Clark steps down into the altar, the congregation gets to its feet before he can say, "Brethren, sisters, sing, and singing pray that souls may be brought to God."

Sally's white throat is a-quiver with melody; she hesitates one bashful second, and breaks out with:

> "Come, humble sinner in whose breast
> A thousand thoughts revolve,
> Come, with your guilt and fear opprest,
> And make this last resolve."

Suddenly there is an arrowy rush of something slight and pale and white-gowned. It is July Ann, who flings herself prone in the straw at the good man's feet. Instantly her father is beside her—has raised her and cradles her against his broad breast. She hides her dry, burning eyes in it, while slow, quivering sobs shake her whole frame. Other penitents come and kneel about, while a white-haired, saintly-looking lay-brother sends up fervid prayer in their behalf. Loud amens all about echo and accent each petition. The

assembly rises from its knees, marvellously stirred, melted, lifted out of itself into a vision of heaven. More penitents come in, and Christians with them, speaking words of hope and cheer. Some one begins a camp-meeting chorus,

> "Save, save, save, Lord!
> Send converting power down.
> Save, my dear Lord."

Sally's voice soars through it, clear, bell-like, wildly sweet. She stands with locked hands, with lifted eyes, just outside the altar, her face gleaming seraph-wise in the flickering light. But Henry Manly has no eyes for it. He is stooping over a tall, dark fellow, evidently a stranger, who has rushed up at the last moment from the very back of the house, and flung himself in utter abandon at the young minister's feet, crying out, "Save me, save me!—I know I ain't worth it, but don't let me go down to destruction!"

Sister Wade crouches beside her husband over the prostrate July Ann. All about are sobs, quakings, heart-rending groans.

Still the chorus peals,

> "Save, save, save, Lord!
> Send converting power down.
> Save, my dear Lord."

The very air is a-thrill. A shout cuts through it, "Glory! glory! glory! Bless the Lord!"

At once a dozen answer it. Penitents spring up with faces transfigured and eyes a-shine.

Christians wring each other's hands, and sob ecstatically, one on the other's breast. Even Samson Wade is all a-tremble. July Ann shudders convulsively, but makes no sound.

Suddenly Sally's arms are wildly outflung, her head drops backward, she stands rigidly, a wildly sweet, "Hallelujah! hallelujah!" pealing full and strong from her parted lips. At once the tall penitent echoes it. With a single spring he is beside her,—has folded her

in his arms, and cries aloud, "Glory! Glory! God has forgiven my sins and given me back my wife! Sally! Darling!—it's Nate—your husband—come back to claim and own you in the sight of all men."

Singing, sobbing, shouting, sank down to startled silence. Almost before one can draw his breath, July Ann is on her feet, her face fairly angelic. She holds out a hand to her father and mother, saying softly, "O, God is so good! I feel, I know, he loves me!"

Sister Whimper and Sister Dawdle sob in unison on the front benches. Back of them a more astute sister says to whomsoever will listen, "It's a glorious outpourin' of the spirit,—but mark whut I tell you. If it hadn't a-been fer Nate Pegram, Sally Sanders would er enjoyed it more, and July Ann Wade wouldn't 'a' come through this year, next year, ner never."

But this may have been merely the view of a malicious old gossip.

The following lively and amusing description of the observance of Christmas among the peasants of Spain is written by José Maria Pereda, and is translated for ROMANCE by Rollo Ogden.

A CHRISTMAS EVE IN SPAIN.

I.

THE last gleam of the sun is dying away, and the air is terribly sharp. It seems as if the barren fields were shivering with cold. The neighboring chimneys send out puffs of smoke, which are swiftly whirled away by the icy north wind that leaves some snow-flakes in exchange. The startled black-bird chirps complainingly from her perch on the wall, or calls anxiously to her mate from the top of an apple-tree. From time to time is heard the melancholy and monotonous cry of the laborer calling his cattle; occasionally the scurrying of wooden shoes over the stones in the alley is perceived, and you need listen no longer, for no other sound indicates that there is any life in that pale and somber landscape.

In the broad porch of one of the houses that adorn it are two little chaps stretched out upon a heap of dried rushes. They are lying on their stomachs, their faces rest upon their hands, and they are looking into each other's eyes. As they have passed the afternoon frolicking over the yielding material upon which they are now resting, to overcome the cold which they scarcely feel, poorly clad as they are, they need only to blow upon their fingers from time to time.

One of the boys belongs in the house; the other, next door. It is the first one who suddenly exclaims:

"I'm going to have fritters to eat, aha!"

"So am I, too," replies the other.

"But I'm going to have honey with mine."

"I'll have something better than that—sugar!"

"Well, in our house we're going to have a meat stew and some wheat bread to go with it."

"My father brought yesterday two fishes—tremendous big ones!"

"My mother is down in the town now to get some lard, some wheat bread, and some cake, and this noon my father brought two jars of white wine, the very best kind. And all the eggs we've had this week are kept for to-day, more than fifteen, as big as that! I tell you what, we're going to spend to-night all of a dollar and thirty-five cents which are saved up!"

"What does all that amount to! Why, my father brought up from the harbor four dollars, and forty cents besides, and we're going to lay out the whole of it to-night. I say, will you keep a taste of the stew for me, if I'll give you a piece of the fish?"

"You needn't think I care anything about that! But you have not got a brother who is a student and who is coming home on a vacation this very afternoon, the way I have."

"But I have got a splendid young bull, and a cow that gives three quarts of milk. Oh, what a lot of it we've got for to-night!"

"Milk, did you say! Do you want to see two jars of milk right away? I'll show you some worth looking at."

Up springs the eager boy, with the other one after him, and together they go into the kitchen, looking cautiously about lest Uncle Jeromo, the master of the establishment, should be anywhere about.

The evening is already coming on, and the boy of the house catches up a brand from the hearth. By dint of much blowing upon it he produces a flickering flame, and by its light they go up to a smoke-begrimed chest that stands underneath a shelf, also blackened by smoke. They raise the cover, and there on the bottom, between heaps of flour, bran, and half of a ham, are seen two large jars filled with milk. The boy of the house looks at his friend with an air of triumph. Both of them fasten their eager eyes upon the jars. Both of them stretch out their right hand, and both moisten their

forefinger in the milk, each in his own jar. Continuing to move as if by a common impulse, they draw their arms out of the chest, and stand face to face, sucking their fingers.

"That's good milk!" says the boy of the house.

"It's better cream, though," replies his comrade.

"Did you get the cream?"

"What do you suppose! I got up every bit of it on my finger."

At that moment the former recalls with alarm the fearful disturbance his father makes whenever the cream is missing from the daily supply of milk, and remembers the witness to such troubles left on his own ribs by his father's hand. For that reason, fearing a fresh drubbing, and in order to make his own innocence perfectly clear, he flings the brand into the fire, grasps his friend by the trousers, and begins to call out in a tone of the greatest anguish:

"Father! Father!"

But the sybaritic prisoner, seized with mortal terror, gives a terrific twist to his jailer's hands, and scuttles out through the yard, licking his chops.

Uncle Jeromo, who is tiring a wheel out behind the house, hurries in at the sound of the cries, and, not believing his boy's story about the theft of the cream, thinks that the fellow himself has skimmed it, and gives him a couple of resounding blows. The boy shrieks, and the father threatens him with more of the same. In the midst of the cries and warnings the voice of Aunt Simona is heard in the doorway.

"Oh, was there ever such folks as you! This is the way I always find you."

"Oh dear, mother, mother!" exclaims the boy, running to cling to the good woman's skirts.

"What are you crying for, my boy? Who has been beating you?"

"Mo-mo-mother! It was fa-fa-father!"

"And you'll get some more of it," murmured the latter, going out to the stable to look after the cattle. "I will teach you to guzzle the cream!"

"I didn't take it, I tell you! It was Tonu, Tonu Zancuda—oh, dear!"

"Very likely it was, little angel! He is the sneakingest creature! Come, here's some chestnuts. Now don't cry any more. Your father is too quick. Has the student come?"

"No, ma'am."

"God grant that a wolf may not eat him up on the way! But where is your sister?"

"She went to the fountain."

"The gadabout! I'll go out and settle her accounts. No, though, I won't, it's no fun going out into the cold at this time of day. Oh that boy of Lambiona's, what a thing he is! Worse luck to him!"

Muttering words like these, Aunt Simona leaves her sabots at the door of the closet, takes off the baize skirt which she had thrown over her shoulders, hangs it upon a plow-handle which depends from one of the attic floor-beams, and goes into the kitchen, closely followed by the little fellow. The basket which she had brought in under the folds of the skirt she sets down by the fire, throwing on some dried thistles to add to the flame. Then she lights a candle, and takes from the basket a little lard, a jar of honey, and two cents' worth of cinnamon. All these she places upon the shelf within easy reach of her hand, and sets about preparing the Christmas supper. In that operation her daughter soon comes in to aid her, bringing home her two jars of water, and protesting that she has not stopped to talk with a living being, she vows she had not, and no one ever found a lie in her mouth!

Uncle Jeromo comes in a little later, and takes his seat near the fire, so as to help the family in the important affair; for the country-people of this part of Spain, of simple habits both by necessity and by custom, take as much delight in witnessing the preparation of the Christmas supper as in eating it. The sputtering of the lard in the frying-pan, the cutting out of the fritters, the breaking and beating of the eggs, and the soaking of the bread in them, the sprinkling of the

sugar over the fritters as they come piping hot out of the frying-pan, the pouring of milk or honey over them—all these processes, and the thought, furthermore, that all this fine food, together with the jar of wine saved up sacredly for the occasion, is to be luxuriously enjoyed by the poor family of laboring people looking on, arouse in them such delightful feelings that—well, you would only need to look at the faces of Uncle Jeromo's family! The affair of the cream is entirely forgotten now.

What demonstrative faces! What evident happiness! Aunt Simona, grasping the handle of the frying-pan in one hand and a wooden spoon in the other, and crouching down upon the bare floor, feels more important than the emperor of China, and regards her task as more difficult and critical than that of an ambassador of peace between two powerful nations engaged in desperate fighting. A great pity it was that the student had not arrived, in order fittingly to celebrate Christmas Eve. For there are many peculiar features of that festival in the country. After the pleasure of preparing and eating the supper, comes that of the arrival of the *marzantes*, for whom the little fellow of the beating has already inquired many times. If the truth must be told, he is much more concerned about them than about the delay of his brother in getting home. This is because the unlucky boy has never heard them, either at Christmas Eve or at New Year or at Epiphany, as he has always fallen asleep before they reach the door; thus it is that he believes in the *marzantes* just as he does in the other world, simply from what he has been told.

II.

You must not imagine that Uncle Jeromo is a rich man, taking the word in its literal sense, simply because he has a son who is away as a student; Aunt Simona's husband, for a laboring man, is middling well off, as he would say. But a chaplaincy belongs to the family, and Uncle Jeromo gladly parted with some of his property in order to meet the expense of his oldest son's

education for the priesthood, in the hope of his obtaining the living. He did this, but at the same time he said plainly to his son:

"If you spend this pretty penny I got from the sale of my land, without making yourself a priest, Heaven help you, for, as far as I am concerned, I will cut you in two pieces."

The boy's entrance into the Seminary was hastened by the advice of the Lord of the Manor. This individual had studied a bit of Latin in his youth, and was so great a pedant that, simply in order to have some one with whom to show off his knowledge, he kept at Uncle Jeromo day after day, until at last he got him to decide that the boy should learn Latin. And so proud is the great man of his learning, and such is his pedantry, that since Uncle Jeromo's eldest born has entered the Seminary, he has several times wanted to give up his vacations so as not to have to face his neighbor at home, who lies in wait for him with Latin talk that is a perfect riddle, as the student says.

Thus it is that the Seminarist, dreading to meet him in some alley or seated on the bench before his father's door, has left the Seminary late so as to reach the village in the evening. This explains the delay which is causing Aunt Simona so much anxiety.

But what she did not know, and what the student himself could not suspect, was that, when he stepped into the tavern hard by to spend sixpence in quenching his thirst, the first person he was to meet, after the tavern-keeper, would be none other than the Lord of the Manor. No sooner did the latter catch sight of the student than he launched at him an "*amice, quo modo vales*," which bereft the poor fellow even of his thirst.

"The deuce take the man!" he muttered, hastening to pick up again the bundle of clothes which he had laid down on a bench as he came in.

"*Unde venis? Quorsum tendis!*"

"Oh, see here, I say! I've come four leagues on foot, and have no mind for joking of that kind. Good-by."

"Wait a moment, man! Why are you always so unsociable?"

"You're such a Paul Pry! One of these fine days I'll set you a sticker in Latin that you won't see into in a year. For, as far as that goes, I know a thing or two. Why, if I get you into theology once, we'll see what a figure you'll cut."

"*Parce mihi, incipiens sacerdo.*"

"Be careful what you say, I tell you, for, though you may think I do not understand, I know how to translate. I can't stand everything."

"You are a weak creature, without a bit of the *virum fortem.* Oh, don't hurry off so! Why, I want to walk along with you to your home."

It was all of no avail. The Seminarist quickened his pace, cursing his evil star; he left the importunate great man in the middle of the road, and did not stop until safe inside his father's kitchen, where he presented himself in the worst possible temper.

"The deuce take that man!" was his only greeting as he found himself in the bosom of his family.

"Why, what has happened?" asks Uncle Jeromo.

"The same old thing! That crack-brained fellow—with his everlasting Latin!"

"But what trouble is that to you? Haven't you studied three years now? Why didn't you answer him?"

"Because I am not such a braggart as he. And besides, he has studied in a different way. My Latin doesn't have all those catches that he knows. I tell you, I wish he'd try me in psychology once! I'm perfectly at home in that."

"But when are you going to say your first mass?" asks Aunt Simona, lost in wonder, while the two children are gazing at the student with open eyes. "Why, the place is going to ruin—the priest is so old."

"And he doesn't know a thing, mother. If it was only one of us students now! We are learning such a lot! You ought to see the sermons I deliver when it comes my turn!"

III.

As it is by no means our main object to draw the portrait of Uncle Jeromo's eldest son, we may leave out entirely the dialogue brought on by his outburst against the Lord of the Manor, and go on again with the matter we had in hand, witnessing the supper of this worthy family on Christmas Eve. The student takes from the fire the pot containing the stew, in order that the flame may dry the mud upon his trousers. His sister has carefully gathered up his cloak and shirts. Then he takes the jar of milk, his father attending to the sugar, and is ready to help his mother and sister in making the toast, enlivening the work with tales of his achievements and adventures as a student.

When every delicacy is "fit to be eaten by an angel," as Aunt Simona avers, so perfectly prepared is it, and while all are carefully keeping close to the fire for the sake of the warmth, another operation is got under way, no less important than the supper itself: namely, setting the *lazy* table.

This table is only a rectangular board, fastened to the kitchen wall by a hinge at one end; the other end is held up to the same wall by a strap. When this is loosened, the table comes down like the portcullis of a fortress, and is kept in a horizontal position by means of a foot, or prop, hanging down from the board itself. This kind of table is used in the country only on occasions of festival importance, or when there is a wedding in the house. Therefore we should not be surprised at the tumult caused in Uncle Jeromo's kitchen by the operation of lowering it.

"Don't let it fall on you!"

"Help me with this side!"

"Take away that bench!"

"Pick up that spoon!"

"There it goes!"

"It's twisted!"

"Fasten it there!"

"Look out for your foot!"

There are little less outcry and greater precautions than if it were a question of launching a three-decker!

The table once set, and the luxuries all on it at last, the student says grace. But we will leave the family to sup in perfect freedom; it is an operation which, save for a few slight differences in the dishes and the vigor of mastication, we all perform in the same manner. Besides, our presence might prevent the good Jeromo from scraping out the gravy from the pot in which the stew was made, or his wife from putting her finger into the dish of toast to mix the sugar well, or the Seminarist from so completely draining his glass of white wine.

Let us return to the same kitchen an hour later. All are more talkative than before, and even the old laboring man has smoothed out his customary wrinkles. The small boy is stretched out on a bench, soundly snoring, and the student is talking Latin, and vowing that, if at that moment the Lord of the Manor were to quiz him, there would be a terrible time. Aunt Simona is humming in a low voice:

> "To-night is Christmas Eve,
> To-morrow's Christmas holy;
> At twelve o'clock the Virgin's babe
> Is laid in cradle holy."

Her daughter is preparing to join in the song, when there is heard in the yard a chorus of neighs and a sound on the cobble stones as if twenty horses were coming in.

"Robbers are there!" a frightened city man would say in such circumstances.

Not at all, sir; these are the *marzantes*—that is to say, a couple of dozen of the young men of the place who go running about from house to house. The noise over the stones and the neighing are produced by the wooden shoes and the lungs of the youths.

This event has a most pleasing effect upon the persons in the kitchen; they are silent as statues, and listen intently.

"Well, Señor Don Jeromo," says a voice from the doorway, speaking in falsetto so as to disguise its true tones, "give us a sight of those shoulders curing there on the pole, and of those rich eggs of the speckled hen that was cackling out in the yard. Come, do it!"

The chorus neighs vigorously in answer to this first onset of *algarabía*, as the introduction of the *marzantes* is technically called, and then the voice begs again for a morsel of this and of that, until at last it stops, saying,

"Which will you have? Shall we sing or pray?"

"Pray," says Jeromo.

"Sing, of course!" breaks in the student. "I like these things very much. Come, sing!" he adds, opening the window the merest crack.

This command is received outside with another chorus of neighs, and the *marzantes* at once begin to sing, in a doleful and unvarying tone, a very long narrative poem, beginning,

"In Bethlehem's manger rude,
The Virgin's child is born,
A babe more rich than gold,
Bright as the sun at morn,"

and ending,

"To the people of this place,
May victory be given;
In the present life much grace,
And glory then in heaven."

The last verse has a variant which the *marzantes* are accustomed to use when nothing is given to them, or when they are tricked with food filled with ashes:

"For all in this house,
I wish at this hour
That even their bones
The mange may devour."

The terrific encounters of wit to which this ejaculation usually gives rise, and the by no means despicable ones which are provoked when the *marzantes* go to the

tavern, perhaps meeting others from another neighborhood, perhaps getting into a dispute with some passer-by, are doubtless the reason for the leader's disguising his voice, and for his companions keeping in the background.

But in Jeromo's house no tricks are tried upon anybody, and Aunt Simona passes a bit of refreshment to the *marzantes;* and they, after performing the former verse, march away neighing with delight.

The family gives the finishing blows to the supper, drinking the last drops of the wine. The little fellow wakes up and asks for the *marzantes.* When he learns that they have come and gone, he fills the kitchen with his howls. His father begins to cuff him, but his mother and the student interpose. The fire goes out, the light of the candle flickers, the girl nods, the cat lazily mews, Jeromo's pipe falls from his mouth more than once, the Seminarist talks stupidly about the phenomena of light; and when the neighing of the *marzantes* is heard far away, with slow and reluctant steps the family of Uncle Jeromo go to seek in repose the end of the lively and pleasant evening.

Aunt Simona is the last to go. While she is lamenting that prayers had been omitted on account of the extra doings, and vowing that the deficiency shall be made up the next day, she puts away in the chest that we know of the remains of the bread, the sugar, and the lard, so that on Easter day the family would have something to remind them, provided the materials were skillfully handled, of Christmas Eve.

Those who wish to eliminate the pathetic element from Christmas Day, and who believe that merry stories only should celebrate this joyous festival, will find here one that will supply their need. It is anonymous.

TWICE MISTAKEN.

FROM A BACHELOR'S DIARY OF CHRISTMAS DAY.

CHRISTMAS EVE—*Half-past nine.* Crumms comes to my room to clear away tea.

"I suppose, sir," he says, as though it were a subject not admitting of a doubt, "I suppose you don't dine home to-morrow."

Both the tone and remark are unfortunate. I have not an invitation to dine out, and I cannot insist upon dining at home, as my arrangement with the Crummses provides for dinner on Sundays only. I had intended to put my difficulty to my landlady, who is good-natured and easily persuaded. I find, instead, I have her husband to deal with; so I close my book slowly and say, "Well," as if I were thinking and not quite certain.

Mrs. Crumms could have waited to hear what I had to say; not so her husband. He looks surprised at my hesitation, and quickly puts in a clincher.

"Most gentlemen dine out on Christmas Day," he says, staring at the wall some feet above my head; "and Mrs. Crumms always expects a holiday on that day."

I feel after that statement the only thing to be done is to surrender gracefully.

"Of course; quite right. Oh, yes! I shall dine out, Crumms."

"Very well, sir," he replies, in a tone as if he had never raised the question, but was simply taking an order in his old capacity of hotel waiter. "Anything else, sir? Good-night, sir."

Then Crumms goes downstairs triumphantly, and I

doubly regret having stayed in town, instead of going home, since I shall have to get my solitary Christmas dinner at a London hotel.

Christmas Day.—Mrs. Crumms this time brings in my breakfast. She has a large apron pinned over the front of her dress, and her sleeves are tucked up, which mean, with her, cooking. As she sets out the things, she wishes me the compliments of the season. "And I hope you'll enjoy yourself, sir," she adds, "for I am sure you want a holiday, with your sitting here reading to all hours of the night."

She means it kindly, and not as a hint. I pay for my own coals and candles—for the former particularly, they being supplied by the Crummses—so I thank her for her good wishes. I don't anticipate much enjoyment; on the contrary, I am at a loss to know what to do with myself, and heartily wish that the day was over.

One o'clock.—I see through the window, as I come back from church, that the Crummses are at high dinner. Crumms himself is in his shirt-sleeves and on his legs, and looks very much as if he were making a speech. There are cries of "Bravo, Pa!" and a great deal of laughter, both of which subside very rapidly as I knock. One of the smallest of the many small Crummses comes to the door, with her little cheeks and chin bearing unmistakable signs of pudding. She just peeps out to see who it is, and then scampers away, as if afraid of losing some of the good things in the parlor. For this want of respect to the lodger I hear her mamma rebuke her sternly, and then Crumms says, "Never mind, mother; nobody is naughty on Christmas Day." Rounds of applause. I go upstairs, and "pa" proceeds with his speech.

Two o'clock.—I ring the bell for some hot water, and Crumms answers it in full waiter's dress, white tie, dress coat, and a low-cut waistcoat showing a large amount of shirt front with an elaborate frill. He walks into the room as if he is very proud of himself, and is more waiter-like in his manner than usual.

"Hot water to wash with, sir? Yes, sir." Disappears and reappears with the jug, which he sets down upon the table.

"Why, Crumms," I ask, "where are you going?"

"Out waiting, sir." He pauses for a minute, then becomes less majestic and more confidential. "I always go out waiting on Christmas Day," he adds, "and I have been to the same house for the last fourteen years. The gentleman and lady are a couple as came to the Crown Hotel the year I married Mrs. Crumms. We were both at the hotel, you know, and were just leaving to come up here. The lady took a great liking to Mrs. Crumms, and one day she said to me: 'So you and your wife are going up to London, Crumms. Now you must come and wait at my house, when we want help.' And I have been there every Christmas Day since then—not missed one. I go on other days"—he says this quickly, in an off-hand manner, as if the other days were of no importance—"but they ain't regular."

"You go there and help wait, I suppose?"

"Well, I do most of the waiting; all of it, you may say," he replies. "They don't keep a man, and there are only the female servants. They ain't much good, not like Mrs. Crumms. She could wait, she could. She was wonderful handy. That's what first made me look at her!"

"And where do you go to?" I inquire.

"Bedford Square. Domville is the gentleman's name."

On the spur of the moment, just to see what Crumms will say, I ask, "Will you take me with you to-day?"

"You, sir!" he replies, in surprise. "Well—really, sir, I don't think Mr. Domville would—though I have known him these fourteen years, I am afraid he'd think it rather presumptuous of me to introduce a gentleman into his house!"

"I suppose so," I answer; the idea of the waiter introducing a friend as a guest at the dinner being certainly very absurd. "But I didn't mean that. Take me with you to wait."

"You! you go out waiting!" says Crumms, holding his breath.

"Yes, if you will take me."

"Well! I do call that a good joke," he gasps out. "Lord, sir, what an idea!" Then, dropping his waiter-like manner altogether, and becoming thoroughly human, he bursts out laughing.

I had only intended to chaff Crumms, but it strikes me that going out with him will be more lively than spending Christmas Day by myself, and I begin to hope that he will take me.

"I dare say Mr. Domville would have no objection to an extra hand," I urge, "and I could go as a young friend of yours, who is just beginning and wants to learn his business."

"Sir," pants Crumms again, "you ain't serious."

"By Jove, I am, though," I say. "I don't know what on earth to do with myself all day. I should like to go out waiting."

Crumms's laughter, which is very prolonged and loud, and accompanied with a great deal of coughing and wheezing—for he is rather stout—brings his wife up the stairs, and finally into my room. She begs my pardon for the intrusion, and then turns to her husband.

"Crumms," she says, "you mustn't excite yourself. Remember, you are going out waiting."

"Yes, yes, my dear; I remember," he answers, as soon as he recovers his breath. "But here is Mr. Herbert wanting to go out waiting too."

"Mr. Herbert!" says my landlady, surprised in her turn.

"Yes, Mr. Herbert," repeats Crumms; and his laughter bursts out again like a smouldering fire.

I immediately began to enlist Mrs. Crumms on my side. She is a merry, good-natured woman, with rather a partiality to "wild young gents," as she calls them, and is fond of telling tales about the young fellows round Newford when she was at the hotel. There isn't anything particularly wild in my going out waiting with Crumms, but his wife seems to think there

is, and it puts her in mind, she says, of Mr. Somebody at her old place.

"It is just what he would do, sir," she continues; "and I did think you were such a quiet young gentleman, Mr. Herbert. Law! Crumms," she adds, turning to him, "you wouldn't spoil a bit of fun like that, I know."

"But Mr. Domville——" begins her husband.

"Nonsense Mr. Domville!" she replies. "He needn't know; and if he does, why, he'd laugh as much as any one."

"But you will be careful, sir, won't you?" says Crummns, yielding to the two of us. "You won't let Mr. Domville know. There isn't any one likely to be there as will recognize you, I hope."

I satisfy him on these points; then Mrs. Crumms, with a due regard for her position among her neighbors, raises one nearer home. "It won't do, though, sir," she says, "for you and Crumms to go out together. The people about here all know that he is going out waiting; and may be, if they saw you together, they might think you were a waiter, too." I don't see that it would matter if they did, but to my landlady such a mistake seems to represent some dreadful calamity; so it is arranged that Crumms shall go first and send a cab, and then wait for me in the crescent a little distance off.

Three o'clock.—Crumms and I are in the cab on our way to Bedford Square. The whole time he is either laughing at my going out with him, or nervous as to the result. In the latter mood he is almost piteous in his entreaties to me to be careful, and repeats over and over again his directions how to wait. We stop the cab at the corner of the street leading to the square, and walk on to the house.

It is a big house with a large hall. There is a window by the street-door at one end, and a broad staircase at the other. The dining-room is fair-sized; the walls are painted and hung round with pictures. It is rather dark and heavy-looking, however, and the fur-

niture is old and massive. There are three servants going about with trays and piles of plates, busy laying out the table. They stare at me as I stand by the side of Crumms, who introduces me as a young friend who wants to see a little genteel waiting, and whom he has made bold enough to bring. Then as if that settled the matter, he goes off into business, and asks several questions as to the number and names of the guests. I notice that the servants all treat him with great respect, and he, in return, is condescending and polite to them. With me, when they are in the room, he assumes an authoritative air, and all the time he is very grave, and looks as if the cares of his position were too much for him. He smiles once when we are alone, as I hand him a jelly; and then, his muscles being relaxed, his old fit of laughing suddenly breaks out again. He cannot laugh aloud, but he laughs inwardly and shakes so tremendously that the jelly rolls and trembles to an alarming degree; and it is only by the means of promptly taking it under my own protection, that I save it from being shaken on to the floor.

"O Lor'! to think of you being here," he mutters; and the next instant is gravity itself, as Mrs. Domville's voice is heard on the stairs.

She is a middle-aged lady, and speaks in a friendly manner to Crumms, and is particular in her inquiries after his wife and children. He points me out as a young friend of his, who has come to help him; and Mrs. Domville seems quite satisfied, and goes upstairs again to the drawing-room.

Four o'clock.—The dinner is ready, and all the guests have arrived. Crumms stations me behind the door, and goes himself to the head of the table, and I watch the people as they come into the room and take their places.

They are mostly middle-aged, like their host and hostess, and evidently old friends; for several nod to Crumms, and one gentleman is quite hearty in his greeting, and says it would not seem like a Christmas dinner without him. Mr. Domville laughs, and asks

after Mrs. Crumms; but Crumms refuses to be thawed, and replies in a tone as if such trifling questions interfered with the responsibility of his position.

So far everything has gone right. Then comes a slight mishap. Just as everybody is seated and silent, and Mr. Domville going to say grace, Crumms gives me a signal, and I step forward quietly to close the door. The movement attracts the attention of a young lady, who is sitting with her back to me, and she turns round. She evidently has not noticed me before, and her laughing gray eyes scan me with surprise. My face is a new one to her among the many well-known faces around the table. I suppose she thinks I am a guest, who has arrived late and just come into the room, and, seeing me standing there, and no one taking any notice of me, she says, courteously,

"Isn't there a chair for you?" Then turning round to Mrs. Domville, "O, aunt! here is a gentleman left outside in the cold."

Mr. Domville, instead of saying grace, looks up, stares, and half rises from his chair, while the company all turn toward me. It is certainly an embarrassing moment; but Mrs. Domville comes to the rescue, and says quietly, "It is quite right, Helen." The young lady looks a little confused, and then Crumms, in his nervousness, spoils everything by rushing up to her and calling out:

"He's come to help me wait, Miss Linton."

My fair champion thereupon blushes very deeply, and begs my pardon; several of the guests have simultaneous twitchings of the mouth; Crumms looks half-angrily, half-apologetically at me; and at last Mr. Domville, in a shaky voice, says grace, while Miss Linton bends her head very low and hides her face. The next minute Crumms, serious and imperturbable as ever, removes the cover off the soup, and the dinner begins.

I believe I acquit myself creditably. Crumms declares that I did wonderfully well, and is inclined to think, I believe, that I have wasted natural talent by not being a waiter. At any rate, I don't spill anything

over anybody's dress, or knock anybody on the head. I carefully watch Crumms for his signals, and, thanks to having been at a dinner before, though not in the capacity of a waiter, I have some idea of what ought to be done, and so remove the right covers, and hand round such dishes as ought to be handed at the proper time. The greatest difficulty I have is to keep my countenance, particularly when I hand anything to Miss Linton. She is so bright-looking, and it is such fun to see the sparkle in her eyes, and the way they drop if they meet mine, and a little repressed smile steals over her lips, that it taxes my powers to the utmost to keep from laughing. I feel that I should very much like to change places with the young fellow sitting by her side. He does not seem to have very much to say for himself, and he examines every dish, as it is handed to him, through an eyeglass. His inspection is so long, and his nose is so close, that I have a growing inclination each time to bob the dish up in his face. For more than half the dinner he is silent, then he talks a little politics—stanch Conservatism—and Miss Linton immediately enunciates the strongest Radical principles, upholds woman's suffrage and their having seats in Parliament. This seems to overwhelm him, and he retires from the contest with a sigh.

Later on, he tries again, when the mince-pies are being handed round.

"Will you have a happy-month?" he asks, with a faint smile, which disturbs his eyeglass and brings it down into his lap. He readjusts it slowly, and, not trusting himself to repeat the joke, asks her to have some mince-pie.

"No, thank you; I never eat them," she replies.

"Have you never tasted them?" he says, frowning as if he were a barrister cross-examining a witness, but probably because his glass gives a premonitory slip.

"Oh, yes; I have tasted them, but I don't care about them," she answers.

He has no comment to make upon her reply, and he helps himself in silence.

Six o'clock.—Crumms and I solemnly put on the wine and the glasses, push the dessert-dishes a little one way or the other, and leave the room.

"Bravo!" whispers Crumms when we are in the hall. "Bravo, sir! With a little teaching you'd make a capital waiter. And Miss Linton mistaking you for a gentleman, too. What a joke! At least," he adds, as if he suddenly feels that he has made rather a mistake himself, "of course, that is what you are, and a gent is always a gent, I say. But you understand, sir. It was so ludicrous."

"Perfectly. I understand, Crumms. What are you going to do now?"

"Well, sir," he says, coming a little nearer, "I generally have something in the housekeeper's room. Maybe you wouldn't like that, though we should be quite alone."

As I want something to eat, and am not particular where I get it, I follow Crumms downstairs into the kitchen. The servants there are busy washing up the plates and dishes, amid a general smell of dinner and hot water, which is far from pleasant. The housekeeper takes us at once into her room, where there is a cloth spread upon a table, and a row of the good things from upstairs on a kind of dresser.

"You are sure you don't mind, sir," says Crumms to me, when we are alone, "because I'll wait till you are done if you like. I am not hungry."

"But I am, and I shall not begin till you do," I answer, and we sit down together. The soup is cold and fast becoming a jelly; the fish looks mangled and unsavory —so I decline soup and fish. I find that the having a little something in the kitchen, after dinner is over upstairs, requires training before it becomes really enjoyable. Crumms evidently has had the full amount of training that is necessary. For a man who professes not to be hungry, and who has had a good dinner a few hours before, he displays a capability for eating that is truly wonderful. I prefer the dishes that have not been touched upstairs; he, on the contrary,

is on equally good terms with all of them. However, I get quite enough to satisfy me, and there is a novelty in eating one's Christmas dinner with a waiter in a back kitchen. The wine certainly is the best part. Crumms has taken care there shall be plenty of that, and makes a most liberal host with Mr. Domville's port and sherry.

Seven o'clock.—Crumms says he must take the coffee up to the gentlemen, and leaves the room. No sooner is he gone than one of the servants comes in, apparently in search of something. Whatever it is, she does not find it. She hunts about vaguely for a minute, and then stops opposite to me.

"So Miss Linton took you for a gentleman," she says with a laugh. "How nice!"

"Miss Linton made an unfortunate mistake," I answer gravely, imitating Crumms's manner.

"Well, I don't know about that," she replies. "There is certainly an excuse for her doing so."

This strikes me as being very open flattery, but under the circumstances it loses its point; moreover, the speaker is rather warm from standing over her tub of hot water, and very plain into the bargain. As I don't answer, she tries another subject.

"You are out of a situation at present, ain't you?"

I nod.

"Where were you?" she asks.

"In the country."

"Notts?" she says, knowing Crumms came from that part. "And so now you've come to London."

At this moment Crumms shuts the dining-room door; and the girl, without looking further for whatever it was she had pretended to come in to fetch, immediately makes a rapid retreat.

"Been pumping you, sir?" says Crumms, jerking with his thumb in the direction of the kitchen.

"Trying to," I answer.

"I knew they would," he replies. "They are awful curious about you, them women. I wouldn't stop here too long now. There ain't anything more for you

to do, and I can say you've got an appointment to keep, you know."

Acting upon his advice, we go upstairs to the hall, and Crumms lets me out, shutting the door very quietly behind me.

It is a fine clear night, and I turn my face homeward, and stroll slowly along the deserted square. I go all up the long straight Gower Street without meeting any one. By the university I see a figure advancing quickly. We pass under a gas-lamp, and both pull up.

"Herbert, by Jove!"

"Why, Roche, what are you doing here? Going out to dinner?"

"Just had it," he replies. "Been to see an old lady home."

He then naturally wonders what I am doing strolling along the streets on Christmas night. I tell him I have been out to dinner.

"They have broken up very early," he says, and then asks suddenly: "You haven't sneaked off to read, surely?"

This is said in a tone as if it were a mortal sin for a man to read for an examination on Christmas Day.

"That's right," he says, when I had disclaimed any idea of reading. "Well, you come home with me. My people will be very glad to see you. We always have a carpet-dance or something in the evening."

I accept readily, and go back with Roche to his house.

Nine o'clock.—We have cleared the room for dancing, and the first quadrille has just commenced. Not being able to get a partner, I am standing on the landing, when a carriage rolls up to the street-door, and there is a loud knock announcing the arrival of some newcomers.

Mrs. Roche hurries down and meets them in the hall. I hear her say as they come upstairs, "You are just too late for the first dance, Helen."

The name quite makes me start.

"By Jove, if it should be Miss Linton!" is my muttered thought.

I half hope it may be; I half hope it may not be; and I haven't time to decide which half is the stronger, before Miss Linton herself comes laughing up the stairs.

At the very first glimpse of her, I instinctively draw back into the shade, and she and her mamma pass by without noticing me.

It seems very ridiculous to meet the same young lady twice in one evening, first as a waiter, and then as a guest; but there—it is done, it is a *fait accompli;* and Miss Linton and I are once more under the same roof. I wonder if she will recognize me, and I watch her with interest as she goes round the room. Sooner or later we must meet face to face; and the awkward moment comes sooner than I expect.

When Miss Linton reaches the door where Roche is standing with his partner, she stops there and talks to them when they are not dancing.

"Is there any lemonade, Edward?" she asks presently. "I want some, if there is."

"That's a bad sign, Nelly, after dining out," he answers with a laugh. "There is some downstairs. I would get a glass: but you see it is my turn. If you don't mind, you will find somebody outside, I think."

Roche leads off with the third figure; Miss Linton comes out upon the landing; and I move from the shadow of the wall into the light.

She gives a quick start with her head, and opens her eyes in surprise as she sees me. There is just a little tightening of the lips, a faint blush rises to her cheek, and then she asks me quietly to fetch her a glass of lemonade.

Roche had said it was downstairs, and I find it in the dining-room. I am rather glad of the excuse to get away and have my laugh out, for the whole thing is more and more absurd, since Miss Linton has made a second mistake, and thinks I am a waiter. It is a very natural error, of course, and, to keep up the deception, I put the glass on a tray and go gravely upstairs.

She is quite composed now, and thanks me unconcernedly as I hand her the lemonade. Then we stand

side by side—I holding the tray in both hands—till the dance finishes, and Roche comes out to us.

"Have you got your lemonade?" he asks. "That's right. Now you want a partner for the next dance. Who shall it be? I am engaged till after supper, unfortunately. Oh, here! Let me introduce you. Miss Linton, Mr.——"

Instead of waiting to hear my name, the young lady puts down the glass quickly and looks indignant.

"Don't be absurd, Edward!" she says, as she walks off.

"Some mistake, old fellow," whispers Roche to me, and catches her up just inside the room.

They are so close I can hear what they say.

"What is the matter, Nelly?" he asks.

"How could you be so ridiculous as to introduce me to him?" she replies.

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Why shouldn't you! He is a waiter; I know that. He was waiting at Mr. Domville's."

Instead of looking contrite, Roche goes off into a roar of laughter.

"It was very stupid of you," she says, half crossly. "It forced me to be rude to him."

"What nonsense, Nelly! I shouldn't play you such a trick as that, of course. That is Herbert; he is in the same office as I am."

"You are not joking, Edward, are you?" she asks quite seriously.

"No; upon my word I am not."

"Oh, I am so sorry, then," she says immediately. "But there was somebody just like him at the Domvilles'. What shall I do?"

"Come and be introduced, that's all. I'll put it right." And they come together on to the landing.

"My cousin made a mistake, Herbert," he says, while she stands by him, blushing deeply. Then he adds, laughing, "She mistook you for a——"

"I made a mistake," she breaks in very quickly, coming a step nearer. "I beg your pardon."

To save her from any further embarrassment, I ask

her at once for the next dance; and it is immediately granted.

"By the by, Miss Linton," I say, when the dance is over, and we are standing on the landing again, "you have never told me what you took me for. An ogre?"

"No."

"What then?"

Her laughing eyes look up with their old merry sparkle into my face. They seem at the same time to question me whether I shall be annoyed if she speaks the truth. She pauses for a moment, and then says, "A waiter," and presses her lips tightly together.

"Thank you."

"But it was quite excusable," she begins, hurriedly.

"Thank you again," I remark, interrupting her.

"You won't listen," she says, plaintively; "I want to explain——"

"That I look so much like a waiter," I added, breaking in again, "that it was quite excusable, taking me for one."

"Oh, no! I didn't mean that, of course," she says, forced to laugh. "But where I was dining, there was a waiter like you—so exactly like you," she emphasizes the word "exactly," and glances quickly up at me as she does so, "and I mistook him for a gentleman, and thought he was one of the guests."

"So you make up for it by taking me for a waiter," I answered. "Well, I think the waiter had the best of it."

"But it was excusable, was it not," she asks, "you two being so much alike?"

"Your mistaking the waiter for a gentleman? If he was like me, certainly."

"No," with a little stamp of her foot; "my mistaking you for a waiter."

"I can't grant that," I answer.

"Very well," she says, with a laugh. Then she adds mischievously over her shoulder, as her partner comes for the next dance, "I think my first mistake was the more excusable of the two."

"And I think the last by far the worst," I replied.

"Do you? Well, I am very sorry," she answers; but her eyes belie her as she goes off laughing into the drawing-room.

Fortunately I secure the dance before supper and take her down.

"You don't wait so well as your double," she says, as I hand her some mince-pies. I had just put them before her for a minute, and then taken them away.

"I am sorry for that," I answer, "but then, you see, I know you never eat mince-pies."

"How do you know that?" she asks, turning round quickly.

"Your cousin has told me a great deal about you," I reply.

"Did he tell you, pray, that I never eat mince-pies?"

"How should I know it if he did not?" I say, with assumed simplicity.

She looks very incredulous. "He didn't tell you that, I know, though I believe you men talk a great deal of nonsense—as much nonsense as women do."

"You own that about women, then, and yet you want them to have seats in Parliament?"

"Oh, now, I am certain you must have been at Mr. Domville's," she cries, "for I never said so till to-day at dinner, and then only in opposition to my neighbor. If you were not there, how could you have known what I said?"

"Do you believe in the theory, Miss Linton," I begin, with a grave face, "of a person knowing, by a sort of affinity, the thoughts and actions of another person whom he has never seen, but whom, when he is permitted to see, he is at once, by fate, most deeply interested in?"

"No, I don't," she replies, laughing. "How nonsensical you are!"

Before I can go on expounding my impromptu theory, Roche comes up and claps me on the shoulder.

"Well, Herbert, how's Crumms?"

Roche has often been to my rooms, and knows my landlord, of course; but what demon possesses him to

come at this moment and pronounce that fatal name, I can't imagine.

"Bravo!" cries Miss Linton, clapping her hands. "Now I know; you went there with Crumms."

"Went where?" asks Roche, in surprise.

"To the Domvilles'," she answers. "Mr. Herbert was there with Crumms waiting. Now, weren't you?" she asks, turning to me.

So, driven up in a corner, at last I make my confession.

"What fun!" she says. "Won't I laugh at mamma! She read me such a lecture as I came here. And I have not made a mistake after all."

"Except when you took me for a waiter, Miss Linton."

"Oh, that was your own fault. I am not a bit sorry about that now."

What Miss Linton did say to her mamma, of course I don't know; if she did laugh at her, Mrs. Linton must have taken it very good-naturedly, for when I go up stairs after supper she calls me "Mr. Waiter," and the name sticks to me all the rest of the evening. Just as we are all leaving, she comes to me and invites me to a party at her house in the following week.

"How shall I come, Miss Linton?" I ask, as I put on her cloak; "as a waiter or a guest?"

"In the capacity which you think suits you best," she answers. Then she adds more softly, "We shall be glad to see you in either."

There is a further note in my diary for that Christmas Day—something about Miss Linton—which, perhaps, it will be as well to let remain private. But about two years afterward, and not so very long ago, there was a wedding-breakfast given at the Domvilles'. Crumms was there to wait, and Crumms's feelings had overpowered him, and required soothing. From being usually calm, Crumms became unusually excited, and was with difficulty prevented from solemnly blessing the happy couple and making a speech to the effect that the joyous occasion was brought about by his taking the bridegroom out waiting on a certain Christmas Day.

A strangely practical cast is imparted to Italian life in this pretty little love story by Veludo Marchese. One does not think of public schools in sunny Italy, nor of buying warm shawls for Christmas presents, nor of having sordid, petulant quarrels, in that region of art and dreams. But the routine of life and the weaknesses of human nature are very similar all over the civilized world. The story has been translated for ROMANCE by Alma Lazzari.

A FORTUNATE FALL.

"NEVER, never will I forgive you! You have spoiled all my joy—and now good-by, Gino!"

It was a young woman who spoke, a beautiful one, too, and her eyes were full of anger as she looked at the young man before her.

He looked with equal anger at her, and, taking his hat in hand, he said:

"I am sorry, Angelina, but my mother calls me, and if you had a son, an only son, you would feel deeply hurt if he were to refuse to spend Christmas with you."

"Oh, I—but——" Angelina broke down and suddenly burst into a flood of tears. Her lover then thought so little of her that he had never considered her own loneliness, and what a sad, sad Christmas was in store for herself! She was alone, she had no mother, no father. A stranger, she had come to Florence as a teacher in the public schools. No one there knew that she had been once in a rich home of her own, with loving parents. Her mother had died in her childhood, and two years ago her poor father had also left her, when she most needed him. A lawyer had informed her that the fortune which she thought she possessed had been lost in speculation, and he persuaded her to sell or rent the quaint little home in which she had always lived on one of the small canals of Venice. Sell it? never. But rents were very low, and she decided to become a teacher, that she might make both ends meet and not be obliged to sell the dear home.

She did not care to teach in her own native place, and therefore she accepted most willingly an offer from Florence.

There she had met Gino, whose native city was hers also. He was a sculptor and, though young, his talent soon made him well known. He belonged to an aristocratic family, and had persuaded his parents with great difficulty to let him study his art. But now he had attained an assured position, and he hoped soon to be able to make Angelina his wife. Up to this time he had hesitated to tell his parents of his love for the poor teacher, knowing how proud they were. He had intended to spend Christmas with Angelina, and they had made many plans. First, they would go to mass, and then old Margherita, the faithful servant, who had followed Angelina to Florence, would light the fire in the big chimney, and they would sit and watch the traditional log of wood burn, and have a nice little supper. But now the poor girl saw nothing before her but loneliness!

"Forgive me, Angelina, my love, forgive me!" cried Gino, kneeling at her feet, as he saw her distress.

She smiled through her tears, and, as if her decision were taken at last, she says quickly: "All right, dear, go now, go quickly, for I am so tempted to keep you!"

She extends her hand and they part.

As he closes the door, she calls hastily into the other room: "Come, Margherita, I am going to Venice. I am pining to see the dear old place again. Come, let us get ready for to-morrow morning!"

And as if she were going to leave within an hour, Angelina hurried to the trunk, to the drawers and closets, and soon she had selected the few things she wished to take with her.

Her house had been rented to strangers, but she had made it a point to reserve one room for her own use, in case she should wish to return.

Oh, how happy she felt when the train started! Venice, dear Venice! She loved Venice as only a Venetian can.

The hours fled; soon Bologna was left behind. *Mestre!* how her heart beats.

"Margherita!" she says, "I must go to San Marco, before I go home. You take the gondola with the trunk, and I will follow, after I have seen the dear old church again."

Poor Margherita does not answer, the tears are running down her old cheeks, for at last she, too, will be back in her own home again.

As soon as Angelina sees Margherita safely on her way, she speeds through the narrow streets, toward the Piazza. She must walk, for her emotion nearly stifles her. It is bitter cold, and the steps of the many bridges are slippery. But the young girl's foot barely touches the ground. The last bridge is reached and she has passed it, when she hears a sudden cry of pain behind her, and, turning sharply, she sees a lady on the ground.

"Oh, are you hurt!" Angelina cries; and she hastens to help the lady rise. But it is hard work, for she is not young.

"I must have sprained my wrist, and bruised my knee," she groaned.

"Can I get you a gondola, signora?"

"No, thank you, my child. My house is only a few steps distant. Will you help me to reach it?"

"Indeed I will. Lean well on me, and we will walk slowly."

Angelina supports the old lady and walks gently, asking: "Does it hurt?"

"Well, yes, it was a bad fall for an old lady. But I beg your pardon! I may detain you? Perhaps you were in haste. It is Christmas, and, probably, you were hurrying to buy some presents for your dear ones."

"I have no dear ones. I am alone."

"Alone!" The old lady looks up at the young and pretty girl, and again she says: "Alone? And no one to spend Christmas with?"

"No one, Madame. Do not wonder. My friends, who knew me when I was a rich girl, or at least thought I was rich, left me when misfortune came, though not

without a word of good advice!" She smiled bitterly. But soon her better nature conquered and she added: "I am no better than they were, for I have forgotten the one good friend left to me. Our old servant did not abandon me, and I should have forgotten to buy her a Christmas gift if it had not been for you!"

In a few words she then told the old lady that she was a teacher and earning her own living. By that time they had reached Meerecria, and turning into one of the little streets branching off from that, they stood before an old palace.

Upon ringing, the door was opened by an old gondolier, who seemed to do also duty as a servant.

"Madonna santa!" he cried, "what has happened to the Marchesa?" and had he not been prevented, he would in his fright have called all the house together. But the Marchesa said decidedly: "Give me your arm, Battista, and keep quiet." Then, turning to the girl standing in the door, she added: "*Grazie*, thanks a thousand times, dear child. And please give me your name and address. I hope we may meet again."

Angelina gave the desired information reluctantly, for she felt almost hurt at the brevity of this farewell. But the old lady suddenly extended her hand and, pressing Angelina's, said gently: "Go and buy Margherita her present. Good-by."

Angelina stood alone. Why had she felt almost happy, leading this old lady? Now she realized again how lonely she was. But Margherita, at least, would be glad to see her, so she hurried to dear old San Marco, and tried to pray. Alas! she could think of nothing. "Ah!" she sighed, "if I only had a mother!"

Oppressed with loneliness, she left the church. Stopping at one of the stores, she purchased a warm shawl for Margherita; then crossing the Piazza, she took a gondola, and in a short time found herself at the door of her own house.

It was a quaint little palace, containing only a few rooms, but it was her home, and she had once been rich and happy in it. Margherita was watching for her dar-

ling mistress. The people who had rented it were from the Cadore and had gone to their country home for the holidays, leaving only an old man in charge of the house. He had been gondolier for Angelina's parents, so that he and Margherita were old friends, and he, too, loved Angelina—"*la padroncina*," as he called her.

Soon the poor child had forgotten her loneliness, sitting and chatting with those two humble but devoted friends.

The next evening was Christmas Eve, and Angelina made some purchases also for the old man, and provided for a nice little supper. Giovanni, the gondolier, was to take her to mass at seven, and then she would come home and have a quiet evening. As she returned from her errands, she saw a gondola leave her door, and Giovanni standing at the door gazing after it with a curious expression. He was holding a little log of wood in his hand.

"What is it, Giovanni?"

"I am to give this to the signorina."

He handed her the little log. Angelina well knew where it came from. While she had been shopping, she had seen Gino in the distance with a gentleman, his father, no doubt, and her heart nearly stood still. She hoped he had not seen her, and she hurried hastily into a store. But now the log showed that he had noticed her, and she was glad he had not stopped to speak to her.

Soon it was dark, and Angelina dressed carefully to go to the so-called "midnight mass," which takes place at seven. Did she hope to see Gino? She had turned the log of wood over and over, hoping to find a message there, but the only thing she found was the date of the day carved on it.

As she stepped into San Marco, she told Giovanni where to wait for her, and he returned to his gondola. She had not seen how he had exchanged a sign with some one in the distance.

The mass began, and she became completely absorbed

in it. She was recalled to herself again by the close vicinity of some one, who seemed to protect her from the crowd. She did not look up. She knew it was Gino, and a sudden calm came to her soul. She became lost to all but the pleasure of knowing that he was there.

Mass was over. People hurried to get home. It was bitter cold. Angelina stepped out into the air, when suddenly Gino seized her hand. Drawing it through his arm, he led her to a gondola. No word was spoken until Angelina found herself under the cover. She said: "Gino, my dear, you must go to your mother. We have to-morrow to be happy in."

"I shall go to my mother, my darling, never fear! And now tell me about yourself. It is so good that you came!"

She told him of her home-longing and of her sudden decision, her journey, and then of the nice old lady.

"If I only had a mother like her, it would be such happiness!" she cried.

But here they are already at their journey's end. The gondola has stopped; she has alighted, helped by Gino. But where is she? Not at home.

"O Gino!" she says, "let me go home!"

"Trust me, darling, and come," is all the reply which he vouchsafes her.

She is so bewildered that she follows him like one in a dream. He holds her hand.

"Here she is, mother dear!" he says at last, "tell her that we may be happy."

Angelina stands in a beautiful parlor, trembling before an old lady in an arm-chair. She sees only a hand stretched in welcome, and hears the words: "My daughter."

She kneels at the feet of the dear old lady, and all she says is: "Oh, I have so wished that you might be my mother since yesterday."

For it is indeed the Marchesa. She cannot rise, she cannot extend both hands, but her eyes tell of the love that is in her heart for the chosen wife of her son.

"You shall never be alone again at Christmas, my daughter. Make my Gino happy!"

"And have you no word for your father, my child?" says another voice, and Angelina is held by the two encircling arms of Gino's father.

"God bless you both! And now quickly come to supper and light the fire of joy. Would you like to burn the log I brought you, my pet?" says Gino teasingly.

Supper is over.

It has been made happy by mutual confidences.

"I have no regret for my misfortune," says the mother, and as she does not suffer, she is happy at the result. Gino had told her as soon as he had arrived of his attachment, and while they were hesitating to accept the stranger as a daughter, destiny had brought them near each other.

They sit and talk until the door opens and the smiling old face of Margherita looks in: "A happy Christmas, and please, Signorina, may we remain in Venice now?"

"Yes, my good Margherita." And she smiles gratefully at her lover, who has not neglected to include the faithful old woman in his plans for the Christmas celebration. Angelina has quite forgotten that she was ever angry with him.

The sweet and subtle suggestion, in this Christmas story by François Coppée, that there is something in the condition of the poor which allies them more closely than others with the Christ-Child, will be a comfort to that vast majority which in every nation can claim such an alliance. The translation has been done for ROMANCE by H. L. B. Porter.

WOLFF'S CHRISTMAS.

ONCE upon a time—it was so long ago that every one has forgotten the date—there was a little boy named Wolff.

He was seven years old. He had neither father nor mother, and was left to the care of an old aunt, who was so cold-hearted that she never embraced her nephew except on New Year's Day, and was so penurious that she heaved a deep sigh every time she served him to a dish of soup. The poor little fellow was naturally so good that he loved the old dame, only he had such a dreadful fear of her that he could not look at her without trembling.

Because Wolff's aunt was known to have a house upon a good street, and a stocking full of gold, she did not dare to send her nephew to the school for the poor; but she had so haggled with a teacher for a reduction in her prices that the teacher was vexed to have a scholar who brought her in so little. Little Wolff was also dressed so poorly that the fool's cap was often unjustly inflicted upon him, or dunce was written upon his back, and his comrades were unreasonably prejudiced against him.

All these other pupils were sons of rich citizens, and made the orphan the butt of their jokes or the object of their malice. The poor child was wretchedly unhappy, and would often hide himself away in corners to weep.

The time of the Christmas festival approached. On Christmas Eve the school-teacher conducted all of the

pupils to midnight mass, and afterward led them back to their homes.

As the winter was extremely rigorous that year, and as for several days a great quantity of snow had fallen, the children all came warmly bundled and muffled in fur caps which turned down over their ears, double and triple coats, knit gloves and mittens, and good heavy boots that had iron nails and thick soles.

Wolff alone presented himself, shivering, in the same clothes that he wore every day and Sunday, summer and winter, and his feet were covered with only the low wooden shoes of Strasbourg.

His naughty companions, seeing his poor appearance, made a thousand jests at his expense, but the orphan was so occupied in breathing upon his cold fingers, and by the aching of his chilblains, that he did not heed them.

Soon the band of boys, marching two by two, with the school-master magisterially at their head, started for the priest's house.

It was good to reach the church, which was brilliant with lighted candles. The children, excited by the gentle heat, sweet perfumes and glittering show, profited by the organ's din and the swelling chants to prattle in a low voice.

Each boasted of the delights which awaited him in his own family circle.

The burgomaster's son had seen before his departure a monstrous goose with truffles spotted with marks like a leopard. At the house of an alderman was a spruce-tree, all planted in a box, from which were suspended oranges, sugar toys, and jumping-jacks; and the notary's cook had fastened behind her head with a pin the streamers of her cap, which she never did except on the days of inspiration when she was sure to succeed in her famous sweet dishes.

And then the pupils also talked of what the Christ-Child would bring them—what he would put in their shoes, which all would take care to leave at the fireplace before going to bed.

In the eyes of all sparkled the anticipation of joy. They thought of the paper roses, the bags of nuts, the trumpets and drums, the leaden soldiers arranged in battalions, menageries smelling of the varnished wood, and purple puppets that could tumble and jump.

Little Wolff knew very well from experience that his old avaricious aunt would have him go to bed without any supper, but innocently he hoped that the Christ-Child would not forget him, for had he not been all the year as good and hard-working as possible? He, too, planned to put his pair of wooden shoes close to the ashes in the fire-place.

The midnight mass terminated; the faithful went away, impatient for the treats which were to follow, and the troup of pupils, always two by two, and following the teacher, left the church.

But under the porch, sitting on a stone bench surmounted by a stone niche, a child was sleeping—a child, covered with a white woollen robe, but with naked feet, notwithstanding the cold. He was not a beggar, for the robe was clean and new, and near him upon the pavement of the vestibule, wrapped in a coarse cloth, were a square, a plane, a hatchet, a polisher, and the other tools of a carpenter's apprentice.

Lighted by the stars, the child's face with its closed eyes had an expression of divine gentleness, and his heavy red-brown ringlets seemed to shine like an aureole around his white forehead.

But it would have made you grieve to see the child's feet, blue with the cold, that cruel December night.

The pupils, so well clothed and shod for the winter, passed indifferently before the unknown child. Some of them cast upon the little vagabond a look in which could be read all the common contempt of the rich for the poor—of the well-fed for the hungry.

But little Wolff came out of the church the last of all, and stopped, very much moved, before the beautiful sleeping child.

"Alas!" said the orphan, "it is frightful for the poor little one to go without shoes when the weather is so

cold! And it is still worse not to have either slippers or shoes to put before him while he sleeps, on this of all evenings, so that the Christ-Child might have a place to put something in to comfort his misery!"

Carried away by his good heart, Wolff drew off the wooden shoe from his right foot, and softly put it before the sleeping boy. Then as best he could, hopping on one foot, soaked with snow water, footsore and forlorn, he returned to his aunt's house.

"Look at him! the good-for-nothing!" cried the old woman, full of fury upon seeing him return with but one shoe.

"What have you done with your other shoe, you little, miserable young one!"

Wolff did not know how to lie, and though he trembled and stammered with fright, he tried to relate his adventure.

But the old woman broke out into gruff, frightful laughter. "So monsieur unshoes for beggars! So monsieur strips off his covering for a barefoot! This is a fine way to do! Oh, well! I will leave the remaining shoe in the fire-place to-night, and the Christ-Child will put in it something to whip you with in the morning, I will answer for it! And to-morrow you shall pass the day upon dry bread and water, and we will see if the next time you will give your shoes to the first beggar that comes along!"

The wicked woman, having given the child two blows, made him go up to the attic, where under the eaves he climbed into his hard cot, but he was comforted with the sleep of the innocent, though in his sorrow he had soaked his scanty pillow with bitter tears.

The next morning, when the old aunt was awakened by the cold, she descended to her lower room.

Oh, marvel! She saw the great chimney full of sparkling playthings; bags of magnificent bon-bons, riches of all sorts, and, in front of that wealth of treasure, the shoe that her nephew had given the sleeping child. It was close beside its mate, which she had left there, in-

tending to put therein a bundle of whips before calling Wolff.

Now when he ran to her, awakened by her cries, and in ecstasies at seeing the beautiful gifts of the Christ-Child, the attention of both was called to a noise in the street. They ran to learn what was the matter, and saw all the gossips of the neighborhood assembled at the fountain in the public square.

"Oh! a very pleasant thing has happened, and a very extraordinary!" they were saying.

"All the rich people's children, whose parents wished to surprise them by suspending from trees the most beautiful gifts, had found nothing but whips in their shoes. The beautiful things had all disappeared."

Then the old woman and the child, remembering the marvellous presents in their chimney-place, were full of fright.

Suddenly there was seen approaching Father Zwingh, the benevolent-faced priest.

Behind the bench at the church door, in the same place where, on the previous evening, a child clothed in white, but with naked feet in spite of the great cold, had rested his sleeping head, the priest had just found a circle of gold imbedded in the hard stone.

All the by-standers crossed themselves devoutly, comprehending that the beautiful child who had dropped asleep there, and who had near him the carpenter's tools, was Jesus of Nazareth, who had become again for one hour such as he was when he labored in the house of his earthly parents, Mary and Joseph.

They bowed before the miracle which the good God wished to perform to recompense the confidence and charity of a child.

"Ah! it was good," said the people, "to have the poor and innocent rewarded, and the rich and contemptuous punished."

The Chinaman has usually been only a small and unimportant element in western story-telling. In the Boston *Transcript*, however, James D. Ellsworth relates this entire story of the partly sad and partly funny experience of certain members of the Chinese Colony in Denver. It is only a question of time when the Chinese Story will follow the East Indian and the African Story. Soon there will be no new field for fiction except the stars.

THE TALE OF AH TING.

SING WAH wore an immense diamond sunk in a ring of American gold, and an onyx bracelet of Chinese workmanship hung loosely from his bony wrist. His idea of beauty was as broad as the Pacific, and if his jewelry was valuable, he did not care whether it came from one side of the ocean or the other. Sing Wah was a man of sense and substance. His queue was gray, and there were black circles beneath his eyes, but, although he wore the same clothes in Denver that he had worn in Pekin, he jingled golden American eagles in the pockets of his flapping trousers.

Sing Wah was an importer of teas and coolies and opium and china cups and many other things of doubtful worth but certain profits. This made him a man of substance. He was a man of sense, because he had always lived alone with his precious goods from the time of his first little shop in a rough pine shanty to the prosperous days when his store, with its plate glass front, was the envy of all his countrymen.

One day Sing Wah decided that he, who had always imported for others, should import something for his own gratification. He wrote a long, mysterious letter to his agent in Chinaland, and then patiently awaited the arrival of the precious bit of bric-a-brac that he had ordered.

"I hope she will be sufficiently beautiful and young," said Sing Wah to himself in the evening. This was

when he had put the wooden shutters over his plate glass windows, when he had bolted and barred the big doors, leaving the whole store in gloom, with only a gleam of light from the den behind it where his bunk was. A man is not old at sixty if he imports his own opium and mixes it with great care, and when Sing Wah put an inlaid footstool under his head, and, bending over the glass-covered lamp, made his bamboo pipe say "waugh, waugh, waugh," he again wondered if she would be sufficiently young.

When he had rolled the sixth ball of gum on the point of his needle, and drawn its burning fragrance through the husky bamboo stem into his own husky interior, Sing Wah ceased to doubt that his latest importation was sufficiently young. He could see her plainly through the smoke of the shop, and she was very young and very beautiful. In his dreams he foresaw her childish figure hung with his rich silks, her plump arms and round neck sparkling with his favorite jewels, and herself toddling about the small back room with one of his rarest teacups always in her hand.

From one of these dreams Sing Wah awoke to find the new importation standing meekly in the doorway of his den. She was the entire realization of his vision, sufficiently young, sufficiently beautiful and sufficiently petite to tug at every tough fibre of his old Oriental heart. Very costly were the silks and jewels heaped upon little Ah Ting, who smiled vaguely and looked more beautiful than ever.

Sing Wah saw that the taste of his agent was good, so he bundled Ah Ting into a close carriage, and, picking up Sam Gee, his lawyer, drove to the office of a justice, and was legally married according to the laws of the great state of Colorado. Then the honeymoon began in the little room back of the store.

Ah Ting smiled throughout the ceremony, but she did not understand it at all. She smiled at the strange city and at the strange American people. She smiled perpetually into the withered face of her aged husband, but beyond that eternal smile her round face showed

neither wonder nor surprise, nor any human feeling. Ah Ting looked as placid as a piece of animated china, and Sing Wah, reckoning her among his most precious possessions, was satisfied.

Now there came to the store on Larimer street a young Chinaman named Chung Lee. He was not of the race of Wahs, but was one of the hundred cousins of John Taylor, the pig-tailed king of Chinatown, Sing Wah's most dangerous rival. Chung Lee bought a pot of hop for eight silver dollars, and then, according to the custom of his people, poured for himself a cup of the storekeeper's tea. When Ah Ting appeared in the doorway, sweetly smiling, Chung Lee dropped his tea-cup upon the floor, where it split with a musical crash.

Ah Ting stopped smiling and looked at the splatter upon the floor, and when she raised her eyes to the level of the stranger's purple coat, there was a pink spot on each of her yellow cheeks.

Then Chung Lee courted Sing Wah's wife, and to him also she seemed sufficiently young and sufficiently beautiful. Sing Wah sold opium to the young man three times a week, and cheated both in the weight and in the mixture, that he might repay himself for the cup that was broken. He did not notice that Ah Ting had lost her continual smile.

One day, in the course of the courting, Chung Lee, the wily one, was taken into the den behind the store. Ah Ting smiled again when they were alone together, but it was not the meaningless smile she had been wont to wear as part of her costume. They were artlessly simple in their lovemaking. With childish pride the wife showed her celestial lover the secrets of the little room.

There were bright curtains on the walls, and red and yellow banners over the curtains. There were murderous Chinese knives, with jagged blades, and two shiny American revolvers.

Just a peep he got of the tiny alcove and the shelf-like bed that was Ah Ting's own. Then Ah Ting climbed upon the table, covered with matting, where her

husband smoked and hugged a wooden pillow, worn smooth by his ugly head. Chung Lee saw in it gold and silver money, wads of green paper and many precious stones of different colors. The glint of the gold shone from his eyes, but faded as he looked into the almond eyes of Ah Ting.

In a damp, underground cellar in the Chinese quarter Chung Lee sat at a table, and played the wonderful game of fan-tan. His working cousins Lee laughed and chatted as they played, and smoked stringy tobacco in the copper bowls of their pipes. Chung Lee did none of these things, but handled the brass counters with placid patience.

All day he played, and when evening came, his pockets were bulged with many coins. But he had the gambler's fever and would not sleep. The small beam of daylight that came through a single pane of grimy glass faded away, and a kerosene lamp was swung over the ironing table. Like an angry demon, the lamp drove away Chung Lee's good fortune, and at midnight the pocket that had bulged, hung flat and flabby.

Calmly the young man left the table and the room. He toddled through the maze of narrow alleys—so narrow that two Chinamen meeting must pass edgewise—passed the temples, the lodge rooms, the gambling houses, the restaurants, the shops and laundries, all with their eternal light and ceaseless activity. There was no night in Chinatown and no sleep, except the great sleep of the hop.

A band of string instruments filled the quarter with doleful noise as harmonious as the constant sawing of nails. Chung did not listen, but went straight to his room, and made a bundle of his few clothes.

He had a handful of jingling silver dollars when he returned to the fan-tan game, but before the lamp went out and perfumed the low room with a penetrating odor of kerosene, the last of Chung's money was gone.

The steely light of the new day came in through the small window. The game ended, the laundrymen went away to their work. Chung Lee borrowed "smoke"

from his patron, King Taylor, and curling himself up on the table where the fan-tan layout had been, prepared for the great sleep. Some stragglers stayed to mock, for he had always been such a lucky player. For two pipes he was indifferent and preoccupied.

Then Chung Lee beamed upon his tormentors. It was nothing. A few dollars. He would skin their pockets for them later on. Skin them, too, and sell their skins as he had sold his old clothes.

For three pipes more Chung was supremely jolly. He was full of the wit of the hop. With the seventh pipe he grew ugly, and muttered under his breath the dreadful threats of the highbinders. Then, after two very quiet, very morose pipes, he went to sleep.

It was a heavy, boggy sleep, like death. His body seemed to melt into a thick, dark gum. No, it was not the gum; it was the faint smoke, blue and buoyant. It went up in graceful curving leaps somewhere. He did not know where this corporal smoke was going. He did not care, for he knew it would be a pleasant place. But he did not want to go alone. Ah Ting comes, too. She is sufficiently young, sufficiently beautiful, but so clumsy beside the light smoke which is himself. She grows taller, and sways from side to side. Her awkward baggy trousers trail out behind her like smoke. She is smoke, and, curling herself around her lover's spirit, they float away together. Are they one or two? It is a sweet journey to heaven. Like fog they rest lightly on the roof of the highest pagoda. Like fog they roll over the beautiful gardens and silent lakes. They sail up and up and up into the blue moonlight night. Thousands of bright kites and shining balloons go with them. But they are the biggest, brightest balloon. Again one or two? They seem one, but Chung knows they are two.

Then Ah Ting broadens out again. She is on her knees, bending over old Sing Wah's head-rest. The cover is off, and she is scooping up great handfuls of gold and jewels, and the green paper, too, and heaping them upon Chung Lee. What shall he do with the

treasures? He stretches out his hands, but it is useless. The wealth melts into his body, which thirstily sucks it up.

The gold is hardened into a solid ingot within his skull. The diamonds are picking their way out through his skin. The paper sticks to his tongue and parches his throat. It is more than he can bear. Slowly and painfully Chung Lee awakes. The laundrymen cousins have another day's earnings, and want the table.

Chung Lee realizes that he is a Chinese gambler without a stake. He is not refreshed by the great sleep. It leaves him faint and nervous, with a roaring head, for he has not eaten for more than a day.

Then his dream returned to him, and he went to tell Ah Ting how much he loved her. When he found Ah Ting, she was sufficiently liberal and dived so deeply into her husband's treasure-box that her lover soon felt himself a rich man. He thought he could now afford a wife, and he wanted Ah Ting for his own. Besides, Sing Wah might discover what he had lost.

Chung Lee decided upon the most important step of his life. He took a Chinese cousin of his, who belonged to the same secret order, into his confidence. One night, when Sing Wah slept, they smuggled his wife, with her clothes and the rest of the jewels, into a close carriage, and hid her away in a little dark room that had no window, but a dim lamp that burned night and day.

Sing Wah was very angry next day. It was not so much for the money, because he had other money in the bank, but for the loss of the wife who was so entirely to his taste.

Sing Wah knew the right side of the majesty of the law. He told the detectives all that had occurred, and offered a reward for Chung Lee. He complained against the lovers for their theft, and prayed the American courts to give him a divorce from his unfaithful wife.

The detectives hunted down Ah Ting and threw her in prison, but Chung Lee they did not find. The cous-

ins of the house of Lee took up the cause of the missing one. John Taylor himself got a lawyer for the little woman, who by elopement had come into his family. There was bitter strife between the cousins Wah and the cousins Lee. The court room was full of Chinamen when Ah Ting was to be tried for the larceny of her husband's jewels. She was not tried, for her lawyer proved that she was Sing Wah's legal wife, and therefore could not steal from him. So Ah Ting was also smuggled away by the cousins of her lover.

Sing Wah had the increasing anger of an old man. He went to the detectives and doubled the reward for Chung Lee's capture, and he pushed his divorce forward as rapidly as it would go.

To the little Arizona town where the Chinese gambler was hidden, the detectives followed Ah Ting. They took Chung Lee and locked him up in the Tombstone jail until the requisition papers should come: the documents that should give them the authority to take their prisoner back to Colorado and claim the reward. While they waited, Ah Ting wept outside the jail, until one day when the news came to her that Sing Wah's divorce was granted, and she was no longer a wife.

Her sorrow had softened the heart of the sheriff, so when she said, "Now me mally Chung Lee," the sheriff hunted up the justice and made all the arrangements for the wedding. The sheriff and the Denver detective were the only witnesses, and with the iron bars between them Chung Lee and Ah Ting clasped hands, and became one in the great eye of the law.

When it was all over, the Denver detective did a very unusual thing. He meditated, and the more he meditated, the more sorry he grew. Ah Ting was the principal witness against the larcenous prisoner. She was now the prisoner's lawful wife, and when the lawyers got hold of her, they would surely tell her that she had the right to refuse to testify against her husband. When the detective got the Governor's requisition and started home with his prisoner, he told Ah Ting that she would have to stay in Tombstone. She clung

piteously to her husband, but the officer pushed her back from the train.

The rough sheriff was not interested in the reward which Sing Wah had offered, but he was interested in the brave little bride. He took the ear-rings Sing Wah had once given her, and changed them into a passage back to the western capital.

It all turned out as the detective had thought it would. Without the incriminating evidence of his wife, the case against Chung Lee fell to the ground. He was discharged, and in the stronghold of the Lees he set up his household gods.

The dark circles under Sing Wah's eyes grew darker than ever. The loss of his sweet revenge made him smoke, and the smoke, the thick smoke of the hop, made him sentimental. His dreams were not pleasant ones, for Ah Ting, so sufficiently young and beautiful, was always slipping from his grasp. He smoked deeper than ever, and even awake he dreamed of the fair Ah Ting. An impalpable image of his divorced wife seemed to inhabit the gay little den. She planted the seed of terror in the old opium-smoker's mind, and it grew from day to day. At last he sold the old Larimer street place and moved into a new building on the street of the Arapahoes.

The wife that Sing Wah lost was a plump, blandly smiling girl. The wife that Chung Lee took into the heart of Chinatown was a pale, thoughtful little woman, whose eyes were sweetened by the piteous mark of trouble and the light of a great love.

It was not a disappointed love, for it had made a kind, tender man of the ex-gambler. But Chinatown, even in Denver, is not a healthy place, and a racking cough crept gradually upon little Ah Ting.

When the time came that a doctor was called who decided that the young wife's only chance was at the great county hospital, a look of dumb pleading came into her round black eyes. She did not know what a hospital was, but she felt that she would surely die if separated from Chung Lee. But when Chung Lee so

hopefully said she must go, she would not say one word of complaint. It was Chung Lee's will, and that was surely best.

The husband was so hopeful that the big, bearded doctor laid a sympathetic hand upon his shoulder, but he did not speak the discouragement that his science taught him.

Every Sunday afternoon Chung Lee, with his favorite cousin, visited his sick wife, who always rallied to receive him. He brought her the sweetmeats and delicacies of his own land, and in the blissful hour they spent together he could not see that she was slowly failing. All the hospital knew that Ah Ting could not get well. She knew it herself, as she lay with her dreamy eyes fixed upon the blue line of the mountains. But neither she nor the hospital people told the husband that it was so. Through the long, glorious fall she lingered. Christmas was coming, and the languid patients forgot their pain as the glad spirit of the season found its way into the hospital.

But Christmas meant nothing to the little heathen bride. She held on as long as she could, but the day before Christmas Day she let go. She would have liked to see Chung Lee once more, but she could not wait till Sunday. The distant mountains faded from her sight, and she slept a sleep greater than the sleep of the hop.

Christmas Day there was a Chinese funeral on the bleak foothills. The silken gowns of Ah Ting made a smoky bonfire. At the head of the open grave a rich feast was spread, and burning prayer-sticks were stuck in the heaped-up earth.

Two fowls were sacrificed by the two chief mourners, but the hen of Sing Wah, the rich merchant, was smaller than the hen of Chung Lee.

This extraordinary ghost story is vouched for by its distinguished author, Marion Harland, as absolutely true, so far as its supernatural features are concerned. We can look only to the Society of Psychical Research for an explanation.

STRANGER THAN FICTION.

"THE question is——" the soliloquist quickened his walk as he spoke, and thrust both hands into his pockets—"the question to my mind is, does the advantage of seeing three counties at once on a clear day pay for the fight with winds from all four quarters at once on a winter evening?"

He had spent most of the December day within doors. In his brisk promenade on the long porch he glanced, when he passed them, into the drawing-room windows. In the warm area spread about by the great fire in the chimney, he could see two arm-chairs set suggestively near together on the rug. He had sat in one all the afternoon. His fancy now placed in the other a slight, supple figure in a wine-colored gown, with soft laces at neck and wrists. She was young and blue-eyed and had rust-colored hair with bronzed ripples running through it; in the cheek next to him was a dimple that deepened when she laughed. His palm glowed and pulsated with the remembered warmth of that which had lain upon it while they talked. He would marry her in May, God willing—by the time the roses would be in bloom on the bare, brown sticks over there in the garden. His home was in Lynchburg, fifty miles away from the Powhatan plantation purchased six months ago by Gervas Miller, his prospective father-in-law.

John Speed, the "catch" of his native town, and engaged to the sweetest girl in the world, yet found the air raw, the situation of Round Hill, noted for its wide outlook, bleak, the landscape dreary. Eliza ("Shy" to her family and friends since her baby-tongue had invented the pretty substitute for her prosaic name) had

gone upstairs to dress for supper; Mrs. Miller was busy in her own domain; Mr. Miller and his two sons were at the county court house, court being in session.

The house was roomy, with a long frontage, a village of out-buildings shrinking out of sight in the rear. Miles of leafless forests faded into mistiness with distance on all sides, broken here and there by pine-woods, murky as ink under the sunless heavens. Broad sere fields crossed by zigzag fences lay near the house, before which a row of pale poplars shivered with presage of coming storm. A red clay road bisected the plantation, grazing the palings of the front yard and garden. This last boundary was lined with a thick hedge of box-wood, and the same in miniature bordered the circular sweep of the carriage-drive and the paved walk leading from the gate up to the porch. The wind blew very damp.

The pedestrian felt his need for the "constitutional." He must have fallen asleep before the fire when Shy left him if he had not come out for a breath of fresh air. But as he walked, he repeated to himself that, while country-life might be well enough at Christmas in a houseful of revellers or in the summer with plenty of riding horses at the disposal of nice young people, hibernation here was a synonym for stagnation. He marvelled how Shy kept her beauty and vivacity amid such influences.

This was the thought in his mind, as turning at the end of the porch in his twentieth round—he counted them to pass the time—he saw a man coming up the brick walk. "An odd figure!" meditated the city beau, but one who had the bearing of a gentleman. A long surtout of drab cloth, open and flying back as he strode forward, showed a blue, close-bodied coat trimmed with brass buttons, a ruffled shirt soiled and rumpled, a buff vest and breeches of the same color as the coat. Drawn over them to the knee, a pair of top-boots stained with red mud completed his attire. He carried a riding whip in his right hand, and the wide brim of his hat was caught up rakishly on one side.

"A queer fossil, even for the Middle counties!" com-

mented John Speed, inly, halting to await nearer approach and salutation. "He might have come over with Captain John Smith."

The stranger ascended the steps deliberately, paused at the top and wheeled for a look at the landscape, taking off his hat with a gesture of intense weariness—a despondent slouch of the well-knit figure that was inexpressibly mournful. His complexion was as swarthy as a Creole's—John Speed took note of details while he still hesitated to advance and accost him. The deep eyes shone with red fire, the lower lip was fast in the savage bite of white, sharp teeth. He was unshaven, haggard, dishevelled. His hair and one eyebrow were iron-gray; the other eyebrow was black as coal, giving a sinister cast to the corrugated forehead.

When he turned swiftly on his heel, and, with one stride, vanished at the hall door, John Speed followed instantly. The eccentric visitor might be a privileged neighbor, or—he reflected uneasily—an escaped lunatic. In any case he ought to shield the ladies from disagreeable surprise in the absence of the host and his sons.

Casting a glance into the drawing-room windows as he hurried by them, he saw the unceremonious guest throw himself into one of the arm-chairs before the fire. The door of the room was shut, and as the Lynchburger opened it, Trifle, Shy's pet spaniel, ran out between his legs, yelping shrilly in pain or terror and scampered up the staircase. John had a distinct glimpse of the figure crouched together in the chair, elbows on knees and head in hands, before the dog escaped past him.

"Why, Trifle! Here, Trifle!" he called reassuringly. "What is the matter, old fellow?"

As the insulted favorite flashed out of sight, the young man pushed the door back and entered.

"Excuse me, sir!" he began laughingly——

Both chairs were empty. Not a creature was present except himself!

He made sure of it by stirring the fire to a glare so vivid that the scene framed by the windows was swal-

lowed up in blackness. He opened a cupboard; went down on his knees to look under the two massive sofas, and the piano, which was set in a far corner of the vast room. He was alone. The flames climbed the chimney-back with a sonorous roar; the crimson light chased the shadows to the wainscoted walls and laid a long silhouette of himself with wavering outer lines across the carpet as he stood, baffled and bewildered, on the rug. The rattle of china and silver in the adjoining room received now a vocal accompaniment, hardly louder than the fire-song. A rich, mellow voice was murmuring,

> "We are passing away,
> We are passing away,
> Like a short winter's day!"

The door of communication was closed fast. The knob rattled and the lock creaked in yielding to John Speed's hand. Spotswood, the chief butler, was setting a supper table spread with damask which reflected from sheeny folds the light of half-a-dozen candles. The blaze of seasoned hickory logs laid bare every recess of the apartment. A dignified mastiff sat upright at one corner of the hearth, sedately observant of the butler's movements, a matronly tabby slept with two half-grown kittens between her paws in the warmest fore-front of the fire. Speed's nerves relaxed, he felt his wits settled like stirred dregs under the peaceful commonplaceness of the domestic scene.

"Can you give me a glass of water, Spot?" he asked, advancing as easily as was consistent with a searching glance all around him.

After drinking half of it, he stooped to pat the dog.

"Did I hear Mr. Miller speak to you? Has he come home?"

"No, sah, he have not. But I'm prespectin' him momentatiously now, as you may say, sah."

"Who was in here with you? Didn't somebody go through this room or the hall just now?"

"Not a livin' soul, Mars' John, sence Miss 'Liza; she

camed 'long the passage on her way to her chamber, 'bout half 'n hour ago. I reckon she will represent herself down 'n the parlor pretty recently now, suh,"—too respectful for significance, but so plainly in sympathy with what he interpreted as loverly impatience that the querist's mouth closed in a smile.

He lingered for a minute longer, exchanged a sentence as to the probabilities of storm with the sesquipedalian official, fondled the black muzzle the mastiff thrust into his hand, stirred the sleeping kittens with his foot, and sauntered back to the drawing-room, heartily ashamed of his reluctance to leave these lowly companions. He was more mortified by the queer chills and creepings along his mental vertebræ, and, because of these symptoms of heretofore unsuspected weakness, inclined to take himself energetically in hand. To this end, he marched straight up to the chair mysteriously occupied and more mysteriously vacated by the surtouted and booted stranger, passed his hand over the back and sides and sat down in it. He had a cool head for his years and a healthy nervous system. Reviewing the incident that had tested both, he decided that he had been the victim of an optical illusion, a freak of the brain or an attack of indigestion. What might not happen to a man of his active habits who sat over a big fire for six hours love-making, with no interruption except what was offered by one of Mrs. Miller's famous dinners?

Shy's voice in the hall, coaxing and chiding her dog, recalled him from misfitted reminiscences of scientific explanations of wraiths and doubles; of an old woman with a red cloak conjured up by the overwought brain of one philosopher; of the elfish figure in green that pirouetted on the dish of another; of Luther's ink-stand and Dunstan's hot tongs—all hallucinations in the opinion of intelligent readers and thinkers. He smiled foolishly in perceiving that he was actually feeling his own pulse. As well be superstitious as hypochondriacal.

"What have you done to Trifle?" said Shy, in her clear, girlish tones, as he opened the door for her.

"He was loath to come down with me at all. A little while ago he scratched at my door, and when I let him in, ran crying and shaking all over into the darkest corner of the closet. I brought him down in my arms, but the moment he heard your step, he jumped to the floor and raced back upstairs."

They had been separated for half an hour. It was therefore necessary that John should wind his arm about the slim waist and bend his tall head to the level of hers; then, conduct her to the fire without withdrawing the support. Still standing thus, he told her how the dog had rushed past him and disregarded his call.

"I suppose a coal popped out on him," observed Shy, carelessly, nestling her head against the broad shoulder beside her. "He is a lazy little scamp, who can't be taught to keep away from the fire. How deliciously warm it is in here!"

John Speed restrained her motion toward the great chair nearest her. He might—he had forced himself to sit in the viewless goblin's lap. Let it be sprite or dyspeptic chimera, or lost spirit, he could not let Shy take the chance that the Thing might still be there.

"Won't you play for me?" he pleaded, in answer to her surprised look. "Something low and plaintive, to suit the twilight hour?"

The little form stiffened very slightly. Shy was sweet-natured and not exacting, but in certain circumstances a girl takes some things for granted. Given—December gloaming in a quiet country-house, firelight, and *solitude a deux*, with no danger of interruption for at least half an hour to come, and even music-mad lovers might do better than to commune through Beethoven or Mendelssohn.

"Certainly!" she replied with alacrity. "It would be *ever* so much pleasanter than talking."

Evading his deprecatory caress, and without heeding the protest it prefaced, she tripped over to the piano and dashed—foot on pedal—into "La Cracovienne," the merriest waltz in her *repertoire*.

John Speed set his shoulders against the mantel, dug

his knuckles into the bottom of his pockets, and awaited grimly the subsidence of the temper flurry. Their "tiffs" were few and slight, placable Shy always showing herself ready to receive the apology he hastened to offer as her due. This misunderstanding must die a natural death. He could not tell her that the obfuscated brain or clogged alimentary apparatus of her future husband had begotten the apparition of a dissipated gentleman in antiquated garb, whose boots were muddy, his linen soiled, and his eyebrows parti-colored.

Gradually he ceased to hear the piano; the bound and glide of the tuneful measures, the swift runs in which the theme returned upon itself, fell on deaf ears. Against his will he was going over what he had seen, or imagined he had beheld since. Shy slipped away to exchange the wine-colored cashmere for the blue silk that set off her blonde beauty yet more effectively. Her complexion had never been more transparent, her wild-rose bloom more delicate, but he dwelt instead upon the swart skin and fell glance of the stranger. He had remarked features and expression with such dispassionate curiosity that the theory of mental excitement seemed untenable. From what disordered closet or turbid deeps of fancy had arisen an apparition as realistic as the bricks which he trod or the frost-bitten box-borders he struck at with his whip in striding between them? Why should an imagination, hitherto healthy, have conjured up a figure unlike any he had ever seen or heard described? And Trifle—what had thrown him into a panic? He shook himself loose angrily from the recollection, laid like a dead hand on his heart, of superstitions relative to the faculty of seeing ghosts attributed to dumb creatures. The dead do not revisit the earth in broad, raw daylight, and on no mission in particular.

"I do think," broke in Shy, making all her movements pianissimo that her plaint might be articulate, "this is the draughtiest corner in the house! My fingers are like icicles, and I can feel a stream of air on the cheek nearest the fire—a sort of chilly breath that

makes me shiver all over!" A piteous instrumental tremolo verified the declaration. "A windy night always gives me the blues!" she averred furthermore, with a sigh.

John Speed captured the icy fingers, summoned back the pink to the windward cheek, and—but this is a digression.

Mr. Miller brought home to a late supper the judge of the court and three lawyers, one young, two middle-aged. His wife would have been surprised had he appeared with fewer guests. But the most elastic hospitality, even in ante-bellum Virginia, encountered barriers in the matter of sleeping-places sometimes.

"I say, my dear fellow, you won't mind camping down on the parlor sofa for one night, will you?" said Gervas, Jr., drawing his prospective brother-in-law aside as bed-time approached. "You see, Judge Bolton has rickety nerves—must have a room to himself, with no clock in it, three pillows of assorted sizes under his head, and brandy and water within easy reach in case of nightmare. Mother looked blank as a new slate when she heard he was here, but I told her we would abdicate in his favor; that we could sleep like roach in the bottom of a pond or wherever she might put us."

Midnight and the dying fire saw the pair stretched out on a luxurious superstructure of pillows and blankets, upborne by broad hair-cloth sofas, one on each side of the hearth. They had been fast friends since their freshman year at Hampden Sidney. Veteran campaigners at twenty-six, in the straits and make-shifts of crowded country-houses, they accepted the situation hilariously, smoked a lingering cigar apiece after the candles were extinguished, the red tips winking across the room at one another until sleep and silence settled upon the rest of the house. Gervas first gave token of drowsiness, his talk of fine girls and blooded horses running down drolly, the pendulum-tongue dropping words like lazy second-ticks.

"Not a more glorious pair of eyes—this—side—the Blue Ridge!" he drawled. "Finney's going train'er—f'

the course next—Fal-l. Ches'nt—bay—one white—foot!"

The auditor laughed silently, treasuring up the encomium for elaboration and repetition at the breakfast-table. Raising himself on his elbow to see if his comrade's cigar were out, and that he had not set fire to the sheets, he aimed the stump of his own toward the faint shimmer in the chimney, drew the blankets up to his chin, and, with a deep breath of satisfaction, settled into his downy nest.

The rain was falling with rhythmic regularity on the porch-roof, a heavy pour that beat down the wind. Only a muffled growl at the eastward gable and an intermittent pipe between the window-sashes told that the powers of the air still prowled over the hill-top. These sounds were merging into "*La Cline des Perles*," which Shy had played for the admiring jurists during the evening, the performer being still herself, but wrapped in a blue cloud with white mists, like silk "illusion," wound about her neck and head, and the porch-eaves for a key-board—when a noise under the window awoke him. He recollected instantly where he was and why.

"Gervas!" he whispered.

"Yes! I heard it! Hist!" came back in the same key.

The rustle of the bedcoverings as they sat upright was audible in the dark room. Some one was walking on the porch with steps that lagged and quickened oddly. Sometimes they stopped entirely while one might count ten or twenty. The rhythmic patter of the falling floods accentuated by contrast the unevenness of the tramp! tramp! from end to end of the wet floor. Suddenly the dragging feet halted at the front door, locks rattled, hinges creaked; the footsteps came stumblingly to the threshold of the drawing-room; a hand fumbled with the knob.

The friends heard each the other's breath, sharply held, as the door swung back and somebody entered. There was a brief pause; the throbbing hearts of the listeners, themselves unseen in the dense darkness as was the intruder, outbeat the rain-pour without to their

strained senses, each gathering himself up for a spring so soon as the trespasser should strike a light.

Instead of this, he walked heavily but steadily, as if nerved by deliberate purpose, across the floor to the corner where stood the piano. There—they were as sure of it as if they had seen the action—he dropped upon his knees. A long, broken sigh shuddered through the gloom, an articulated sob burdened with a word they did not catch, but which they believed was a name, followed by a horrid, sickening gurgle—a dull thud—a hollow human groan!

The young men bounded from their couches, and groped in frenzied clumsiness for matches. The blue light snapped, fizzled, grew red, then clear.

"The candle," gasped Gervas, shaking as with palsy.

As the wick caught, they turned for the first time in the direction from which the horror had leaped upon them. The cover of the closed piano was smooth; chairs, a foot-stool and a lamp-stand were as they had left them on going to bed. There was no prostrate figure or other sign of the nocturnal visitation. Avoiding one another's eyes as in the abashment of guilt, they explored the room and hall with lights. The polished floor of the latter was dry and clean, the outer door locked and barred.

"Yet I could have sworn that his boots were soaked with wet," whispered Gervas, fearfully. "They had the sodden sound of muddy soles."

With the same queer, cowed dread of they knew not what upon them, they stole back on tiptoe to the drawing-room, made up the fire, and, sitting by it, smoked and talked until the dim daylight of a wild rainy morning slid in at the windows.

In all these hours of agitated conference, they arrived at but one conclusion. The awful secret should be kept until such time as they could furnish solution with the mystery. To delicate women and superstitious servants Round Hill would be intolerable were they to suspect who stalked, visible and invisible, through the house at his own evil will.

Shy had been Mrs. Speed for a year when her husband received a letter from her brother, addressed to his office and marked, "Confidential."

"I have found a key that fits the lock," wrote the brave young fellow, "but the darkness on the other side of the open door is thicker than that in which we have groped so long.

"As you know, I have frowned or laughed down the hints the negroes have dropped of mysterious noises, lights, shapes, etc., which have made the stoutest-hearted of them afraid to move about the house alone after dark. But, privately and as dexterously as possible, I have instituted inquiries far and near as to former residents of Round Hill. My father bought the plantation from Thomas Hobson, who purchased it from the executors of Byars Moseley, deceased in 1815, unmarried. The two plantations immediately adjoining ours have changed owners twice in the last forty years. Nobody hereabouts seems to know anything of the tenancy of the house prior to the date I have given. Only, several fair damsels have informed me, with pretty shivers and mouse-like squeaks, that the place 'certainly is haunted,' and that they 'wouldn't live here for anything!' (I have no immediate intention of tempting them to foreswear themselves.)

"Last week—I am coming to it now—business called me to Chesterfield, on the frontier of what we Powhatanites style 'The Yellow Jacket country.' I took dinner with my client, and met his father, who is eighty years of age. On learning where I lived, the old fellow brightened up amazingly, and began to chat of the neighborhood as he knew it when a young man. He was born, it appeared, on the Round Hill estate, his father having been Byars Moseley's overseer. The rest I will try to set down exactly as he told it.

"'He come into a mighty fine prop'ty when 's father died, Byars Moseley did, an' he run through it faste'n his best race-horse would 'a' went, suh! Drinkin' 'n' cyard-playin' 'n' horses, 'n' the Lord knows what else

was agoin' on the whole time, nights 's well 's day. He was 'gaged to be married too, arter a while, to a mighty fine gurl over 'n Gooshlan'! A Miss Fanny Cyarter. Even that didn't stiddy him long. Sech cyarryin's-on 's was in that ar house, 'specially the nights arter Pow'tan boat day, would 'a' made decent folks' hyar stan' on end, suh. For all this 'n' that, you couldn't help likin' the feller, to save your life. He hadn' an inimy in th' world 'thout 'twas hisself. 'S for Miss Fanny Cyarter, she fyarly worshipped him, I've heerd tell. Ennyhow, she wouldn' marry him, but nuther would she give him up for nigh 'pon ten years. Said she wouldn' take a drunkard nor a gam'ler, but she'd never take hur word back, nor marry nobody else.

"'Ya-as, suh! I said ten year—'n' he didn't git no younger nor richer 'n all that time you may be sure. He turned gray powerful fas', but he los' money faster. He were very dark complected; had French blood in him—quality blood o' the bes' sort, I been hear tell—an' had jit-black hyar. One cur'ous thing was that one on his eyebrows got gray 'n' t'other didn'. He use' to say 's how all his brains had settled 'n one side o' 's haid. It give him a kind o' outlandish look, though.

"'Well, things got wuss 'n' wuss, till it come to sellin' off 's race-horses, then a nigger or two. That cut him up mightily. His niggers was powerful fond o' him. He never laid a lick on one on 'em when he wus sober, 'n' ef he teched a whip to 'em when he had a good haid o' liquor in, he'd pitch 'em money by the han'ful nex' day, "fer to 'n'int the sores," he'd say.

"'One evenin' he come home by hisself. 'Twas of a Monday, December coat-day, I reklect, 'n' he'd been 'way mor'n a fornit. Part o' the time 't Mr. Cyarter's in Gooshlan'. They did say 's how Miss Fanny 'scarded him, then, f' good 'n' all, bein' fyar wore out, poor girl! an' no wonder, with 's dis'pated ways. Ennyhow, he'd stopped Sat'day night 't Paw'tan coat-house, 'n' sot up all night 'n' all Sunday 'n' 'most all o' Sunday night play-in' cyards upsta'rs in the tavern with some Richmon'

gamblers, 'n' when he lef' the coat-house, they got his money, every cent of it, 'n' his plantation 'n' niggers, 'n' his watch 'n' 's horses. He had to foot it all the nine miles home.

"'Well, suh! Royal, his body sarvant, he see him a-settin' 'n the big cheer as had b'longed to his mother, by the parlor fire, mighty down-like, res'in' his haid on his han's, 'n' Royal he took 'n' fotched him a hot drink, knowin' his ways, you see, suh, 'n' had a nice supper cook fer him, but he wouldn't tech drap nor moufful, an' when it came dark—a bad, rainy night 'twas, too—he wandered off on the plantation. Thar warn't a nigger quarter he didn' go inter that ar night, an' he'd the same story everywhar.

"'"I'm a-startin' on a long journey," sez he, "an' I want fer to take your good-will with me," sez he. "I ain't been a good marster to you, an' I can't go 'thout you forgive me," sez he.

"'Every one on 'em was fit to break thar hearts a-cryin', when he talked so mournful, an' they all tole him how much store they sot by him an' all that, but he couldn' seem to take no comfort in what they said. Nigh 'pon midnight 'twas, when thar come a knockin' at our outside do', an' my father, he got up thinkin' somethin' was the martter with the stock or somethin' 'nother. An' thar stood Mr. Moseley, wet 's a drowned rat an' white 's a sheet. I'd got up, too, an' was a-listenin' behind the do', an' I heerd him a-goin' over the same sort o' fyarwell to my father.

"'An' then my father, sez he, "Mr. Moseley," sez he (father bein' a Methodis' class-leader 'xhorter), "Mr. Moseley," sez he, right straight out o' the hyme book:

> "'"'While the lamp hol's out to burn,
> The vilest sinner mought return,'"

sez he. "Rub out, 'n' b'gin ag'in, suh," sez he; "'s never too late to men'." Ah! many's the time I've thought o' them ar words sence, an' how solemn my father said 'em, he bein' a 'xhorter 's I said. "Never too late to men', Mr. Moseley," sez he.

"'"An',"sez he,laughin' kinder cur'ous-like—"ther's nothin' 'tall left to men,' Mr. Bass, an' wuss'n nothin' fer to men' it with. I don' know 's the devil 'll think me worth pickin' up. But good-by! good-by!" an' he was off in the rain an' win'.

"'"'Twas jes' arfter sun-up nex' mornin', but still a-rainin' cats 'n' dogs you mought say, when here come Royal a-racin' an' a-bellerin' down to our house fer to tell us he'd foun' his master stone-dead an' cole on the parlor-floor under his mother's picter, a-lyin' face down, with his throat cut from year to year. Ain't the stain o' the blood thar still, suh? 'Tuse' to be, do what they would to git it out. They say a blood-stain won't never scrub clean.'"

John Speed glanced furtively over his shoulder, wet his dry lips with a tongue that was stiff and cold, and steadied on the leaf of his desk the hand that clutched the letter. A horrible sense of unreality possessed him. Now that explanation had come, there was no fulcrum on which to rest credulity. Then the floating haze of letters subsided into lines, the lines from curves into levels. He went on:

"When I got back home, I made a clean breast of the matter to my father. Mother was luckily away from home. I really think the good man doubted my sanity and your veracity for at least ten minutes. We went together to the drawing-room, locked ourselves in, moved the piano, and pulled up the corner of the carpet. The stain is there—a big, brownish splash, running off in larger and smaller streams with the grain of the boards—an ugly, ugly sight!

"We—you, my excellent father and I—don't believe in ghosts, Jack, nor yet in haunted houses, nor in inexplicable sights and sounds, even when we see and hear them ourselves. But what are we to think of all this? And what use can we make of the key, now that it is thrust into our hands?"

In this Russian Christmas story by Stepan Sacharoff, as in the sketches of Tolstoi and Turgueneff, some of the odd incongruities of foreign etiquette strike one afresh. Those who ridicule America for its ignorance of the usages of titled society may well study deeply, and see whether we are more derelict than other nations in observing the essential proprieties. "An Atonement" is translated for ROMANCE by "Luckenow."

AN ATONEMENT.

VLADIMIR PONIATEFF and Irene Vradski occupied very different stations in life. Although he was universally esteemed for the fairness of his judgment, his superior ability as a counsellor in the village *mir*, and his undaunted courage as a hunter and horseman, yet he was only the son of a humble tradesman, while she was no less than the daughter of the proud and wealthy Prince Vradski, Governor of Perm, in Eastern Russia, whose immense castle towered over the top of lofty Mount Konjakofski, and overlooked the foaming and rushing waters of the Sosva. Irene was a tall and slender girl of nineteen, and very beautiful. Her large, dreamy black eyes showed at once the purity of her soul and the tenderness of her heart. She resembled her mother, who worshipped her only child; the two always bore each other company, while the Prince passed most of his time in Perm, the capital of the province of the same name.

On a stormy November day, when the snow was more than twelve feet deep, and a keen, strong wind drifted it over rocks and bushes, Vladimir was returning home from hunting sables on the Prince's vast property, when, on turning the corner of a bluff where the ground suddenly sloped to the valley below, his experienced eye detected an unusually large and peculiar drift which he had never noticed there before. He surmised what it was, and at once turned toward it his fiery stallions, who, snorting at the excited cries of

their master, sped like wind over the hard-packed snow.

There, sure enough, lay an overturned seni,* but no sign of life was visible about it. The horses must have run away, or more probably had been hurled into the deep ravine now filled with snow. With all his might Vladimir removed the snow as best he could on the leeward of the drift, and soon he came upon a human body. It was that of a woman and was frozen stiff; then he found another, a man's, that of the driver; and after more digging he came to that of a girl. He saw that the oven alone could resuscitate the first two bodies, if indeed life had not already left them; but that of the girl was only benumbed. Without losing a moment he began to rub her face with snow until it again showed signs of animation.

As she opened her eyes, she murmured:

"Mother, what has happened?" Then, realizing her position, she blushed, and recognizing her rescuer, said brokenly:

"You, Vladimir Poniateff! Do I owe my life to you?"

The hunter bit his lip, for he thought her words implied disappointment at being saved by a plebeian!

"Oh, I am not worthy to even snatch her from death's grip!" he mused. "How long shall my name be thus despised? But to her I could forgive almost everything!"

With this reflection he carried the beautiful damsel to his own seni, and never before did his heart leap more wildly than now, when his arms were laden with this frail creature. How his old flame, his love for her, which he had thought almost rooted out of his soul by avoiding meeting or even seeing her, now sprang up again in his bosom and fired the innermost fibres of his whole frame!

He carefully placed the girl upon the soft rugs; then went again for her mother, and again for the driver. He piled upon them the furs from their sleigh; but on Irene he laid his own bear-skin overcoat. Fifteen versts of

* Russian sleigh.

snow and drift lay before him, and although he felt that he needed food and rest, he turned his wind-footed steeds to the keen blast, and urged them on with shouts and whip. The snow-storm had abated, but not the wind, and the sun, though it shone with majestic splendor and rendered the whole scenery perfectly dazzling, was as cold as a winter moon. The snow crackled under the iron-shod feet of the flying stallions, the cold grew more and more intense, and the gallant rescuer began to feel the blood freezing in his veins. Under any other circumstances he would have halted his horses, rolled himself on the snow, and have run about until his blood flowed freely: but now three human lives were at stake, one of which was dearer to him than his own.

On, on rushed the swift stallions, reeking with sweat from the mad race, and even when their brave driver ceased to urge them forward, as he leaned frozen stiff against the dash-board, the faithful and intelligent animals kept up their homeward course as fast as ever.

At last they stopped before his house, and their neighs brought out the inmates, who, seeing Vladimir standing erect and without furs, at once divined what had befallen him. With Russian love and intelligence they hastened to carry him in, stripped him of his clothes, plunged him in cold water, and then rubbed him until he came to life again.

His first words were to ask how Irene and her mother felt; but seeing the vacant look on their faces, he hurriedly dressed, and rushed out to bring mother and daughter into the house. The women of the household attended to their needs, and ere long restored them both to consciousness.

Night fell. The horses were spent and must be carefully stabled. Her Ladyship must needs pass one night in the humble home of the Poniateffs. I say her Ladyship, for Irene remained for some time nursing her rescuer, who, through the exertion, and the exposure and the sudden reanimation of his only and all-

absorbing love, fell a prey to a fever, which made him linger at death's threshold for long and weary weeks. The girl had begged for this privilege, in order that she might testify her gratitude to Vladimir Poniateff for saving her life and that of her mother.

He raved about his Irene, who thus learned what sentiments were harbored in the brave young man's breast. In his delirium, he fancied that he was snatching her from a pack of hungry wood-wolves; then the scene shifted to an icy lake, and he thought that he arrived just in time to rescue her from a hole in the ice into which she was sinking, benumbed and frozen. Then it was an avalanche that had overtaken them both, and with his hands he opened a passage through the snow-slide and carried from under it the inanimate form of his darling.

His ravings lasted for nearly a week, and his life, despaired of by the village doctor, had been in constant danger; but Irene's unflinching devotion conquered disease and death, and repaid him the debt of her own life. He was saved at last, and convalescence began. She still remained by his side, and attended to all his wants, and now she discovered how learned he was, and that, besides his self-taught Latin and Greek, he knew also the old Slav.

One day she asked him how and where he had learned the old Slav. In answer he begged her to fetch him from his bookcase a carefully wrapped parcel which he described to her. She complied with his request, and he unfolded an old manuscript, written, he said, by one of "his ancestors."

"Your ancestors?" she inquired in astonishment.

"Yes, by Ivan Vradski."

"Ivan Vradski! Why, that sounds rather like one of my ancestors. I am a Vradski."

"Irene, you are not. You are a Poniateff!"

He said this in such a serious tone that she knew it must be true; but what were his proofs?

"You are a Poniateff, and I a Vradski; so says this manuscript, which gives the whole history of your fam-

ily and mine from the remotest times. I will read it to you. Listen."

When the convalescent paused, exhausted from reading, she knew that Ivan Vradski, an undoubtedly genuine prince and former owner of all that her father now possessed, was, at the time Russia was divided into provinces, outwitted by Alexander Poniateff, his half-brother, who usurped Vradski's estate and name and reduced the real Vradski to bondage, whence he was freed only on the sworn condition that he and all his successors should take the name of Poniateff and be satisfied with a civil office in the small village of Bogoslovsk. Ivan had accepted this degradation in preference to slow death in the dungeon where he had been thrown. To corroborate the story, the writer had purposely given dates and details which, he said, when compared with certain books in the library at the Vradski Castle, would be found true.

Vladimir soon became well enough to warrant Irene's return to her father's mansion, where she at once set out to compare Ivan Vradski's startling manuscript with the books mentioned in it, and still extant in the castle library.

Winter advanced rapidly, and Vladimir was the constant and pleasant subject of Irene's thoughts. Now that she knew he was even her superior in education and birth, and that he wanted none of those qualities that form the character of a true nobleman, she felt that her father would bless her love for her rescuer. How happy she was when Vladimir would come to see her with the excuse of presenting her and her mother with the choicest spoils of his hunt, and how wretched when he left her and stayed away! She could wish to be again under the snow-drifts, or at his humble home nursing him!

Christmas was very near now, and the great Chapel at the Vradski Castle was being prepared for the midnight mass, to which the whole village flocked on Christmas Eve. It came at last; the Chapel was thronged with pious men and women. Prince Vradski

had come from Perm for the occasion, as was his wont, and with the Princess and his daughter mingled with the rest of the worshippers. Mass is commenced, the gray-haired Pope is about to consecrate the bread and wine; he has turned himself to the people and solemnly shouted to the awed congregation: "Christ is born unto you." The bells ring merrily forth the happy tidings, and the faithful follow their time-honored custom of kissing their neighbor.

The Prince kisses his wife, and Irene, under her parents' eyes, kisses, not her wealthy cousin, Pariowski, at her right, but Vladimir at her left. Everybody has remarked it; and albeit the villagers find it only too natural, her parents are astonished and her cousin is highly indignant. He bestowes a look of scorn upon the penniless Vladimir, who returns it as haughtily.

Pariowski decides to ask an explanation from the Prince the very next morning, but finds his uncle quite changed from what he had been during their journey from Perm to the Castle the previous day. Irene has asked and obtained a private interview with her father, who, although greatly astonished at her recital of Ivan's manuscript, could not gainsay its veracity, and before Christmas Day is over, he feels happier than ever before in his life. He has atoned for his ancestor's great sin by granting his beautiful daughter to the brave Vladimir.

Love spares its object all rude shocks and disagreeable surprises; but seldom as cleverly as in this brilliant little sketch by Lucy G. Lillie, first published in *Harper's Magazine.*

IN THE RED ROOM.

On a certain brilliant January morning a young man was approaching the White House, and reading a letter as well as the hansom in which he was being hastened along would permit. His smile as he read was shrewd and reflective. The character of his face, on the whole, was thoughtful, with just a tinge of good-humored cynicism in certain curves about the mouth and eyes. But he was a handsome fellow in a manly way, which even the faultless precision of his attire could not make foppish. Years of foreign life and habits had not destroyed his native American humor or alertness, but had given to both an air of being the result of a large-minded sort of civilization, which the young ladies of Colonel Hale's acquaintance found fascinatingly Saxon, and which made him among men regarded as a "good fellow all around." Without many prejudices, the young man had very decided predilections, and his friends were generally aware that, some six years before, he had been crossed in love. Miss Marion Van Buren had unexpectedly jilted him, marrying a man from California, whose death, however, had made her a rich widow just eighteen months ago. Colonel Hale had made no particular effort to meet her; indeed, had not for some months cared to inquire her whereabouts; but now he told himself that he was sure his folly would be quickly revived, since he had experienced such pleasure when the letter he was now reading reached him.

"Marion is in Washington," the letter ran; "she is going to be at the White House to-day at the reception; and so am I. Pray come there and find me as speedily as you can. I shall be in the Red Room, and so glad

to see you! I wonder if you can imagine half how glad. I have only been in Washington a day or two, or I would have notified you sooner. Dear me! I believe we will talk of nothing but Richmond days. Weren't they happy, though? Be sure to be at the Executive Mansion by twelve. I hope you'll know me after these two years."

Hale smiled again as he read these words, for a very vivid remembrance of the Richmond days arose, dominated by the picture of the charmingly pretty girl who had written this letter; a girl holding as it were the secret of her happy, joyous youth on her lips and in her frank gray eyes; a girl who could read and care for Austin Dobson, and look like one of his delicious Dollys or Susans; who could sit in the saddle for a twenty-mile ride and dance the deux-temps half the night afterward; who had on one occasion played Parthenia in private theatricals so that she turned the heads of half her male acquaintance; and yet whose presiding charm was purely domestic, for never had she seemed so bewitching as when she was pouring tea at her father's Richmond villa, and exercising the most unaffected of hospitality. If he had not been in love so long and so bitterly with Marion—well!

"Talk of *woman's* constancy!" Hale said to himself as he sprang out of the hansom; "nothing but *man's* constancy ever prevented me from falling madly in love with Portia Day."

And he went into the vestibule of the White House declaring to himself that things in this world were decidedly awry.

A small company of people were being admitted within the sacred precincts beyond the vestibule, and Hale followed in their wake, ushered across the hall by a polite attendant into the Blue Room, through the doorway of which he beheld the fair young mistress of the Mansion, to whom he was glad enough to pay his respects as she stood there dispensing pretty bows and smiles, shaking hands with every one, and saying something bright or good-humored, it would appear, to most

of her guests. Many of them withdrew, after a moment, with the air of people who had assembled either to appraise the furnishing of the Executive Mansion, or exchange opinions on the personal appearance or manner of the President's bride, and if Hale had not been engrossed by the idea of meeting Miss Day in the Red Room, it would have amused him to linger among these careful analysts, whose opinions were audible and decidedly pronounced, and who stood for the most part in little detached groups at distances whence they could make a shrewd and critical observation of their hostess.

Hale escaped presently through the Green Room, and thence around to the lower door of the charming parlor where he might expect to find Miss Portia Day.

That she was waiting for him eagerly was evident, for he had not more than crossed the threshold of the Red Room before he was conscious of her presence; saw that she moved a little; that her eyes were fixed upon the door with something very gentle in their greeting. She was standing against a tall vase of ferns, whose green width and luxuriance formed a fitting background for her charming figure, in its simple costume of soft gray, with ornaments at her throat and in the clasp of her belt which Hale was sure he remembered choosing with her—queer Oriental stones in dull silver setting. Her face was framed daintily in a little velvet bonnet. She had, as always, thought Hale, the look of fine finish which he admired in a woman, and he permitted himself for an instant to care for the girl's fairness, even though it "be not for him."

"I am so glad you sent for me!" was Hale's greeting as he took Miss Day's hand in his. And "How well you are looking!" he added.

"Yes," said Portia, frankly, and without a trace of embarrassment, "I suppose I am, since I *am* perfectly well. I have been home from Europe nearly six months, and have had neither nervous prostration nor malaria, and as yet no one has thought it necessary to recommend Florida to me." She laughed gayly, looking up at him with her old sunny manner. "Now let us

sit down over here," she continued, "for I want to hear all that you have been doing."

Hale seated himself on a divan next to her, feeling as though the months of absence were suddenly bridged over by his pleasure in this meeting.

"And so Marion is coming here?" he said, presently, feeling it best to plunge at once into the subject.

"Yes. And now you know, perhaps, why I sent for you."

"Let us hope you wanted to see me alone," he declared.

"I don't think I ever wanted to see any one more. But we must talk about Marion at once. Tell me—what is your last recollection of her?"

Hale looked ahead of him absently for a moment, and then brought his eyes back to the girlish face near him.

"My last remembrance," he said slowly, "is at the Barnetts' ball; she was looking very beautiful, and—it was just a week after she had broken our engagement. Yes, she was very lovely."

"No doubt. And you were very much in love, I suppose?"

"Yes. It seemed to me as if things in life were particularly hollow. Do you remember all the nonsense I talked to you that evening?"

The girl smiled beautifully, for there came across her a happy consciousness that he had made that evening one of her radiant memories.

"You told me, I remember," she said, "confidentially, that it was very foolish to start out in life with much belief in human nature. But, do you know, I have never lost my faith, and, curiously enough, I have always believed in you."

"I ought to believe in myself, then," the young man said, eagerly, "because I have always admired your penetration. I have so often wondered just what it was intended you should be. I should hate to think of your making any mistakes."

"Like yours, for instance," she said, critically.

He seemed a trifle annoyed. "Are you engaged, then?" he exclaimed.

She shook her head. "No; and yet I am *considering* some one. It is some one who has been a good friend to me for years, and whom I admire immensely."

"I admired Marion," he said, quickly, "but let me assure you that it was not with very much foundation. Do you remember my telling you that evening how mistaken I was in fancying that a clever woman was all that one needed in a wife?"

"Yes. We were sitting up in the studio."

"They were playing the 'Sweethearts' Waltz,' if you remember."

"You had just been dancing with Lady Alice Hopeton. I think you admired her very much. And that was the first evening I ever thought of what there was really to care about in life. You seemed, with all the cynicism you prided yourself upon, to understand what was really vitally worth anything. That was just a week before papa hired the villa at Richmond."

"And two years before I saw you again."

"Ah, but, my friend," exclaimed Portia, lowering her voice slightly, as a large, elderly woman, who seemed to have lost her party, drifted near them, "what days those were! Will you ever forget the mornings on the river, or the old inn where we took tea when the thunder-shower came up?"

"And the landlady mistook us for bride and groom," he said joyously.

"I remember it all," she went on, "and I am glad to talk to you about it, because you remind me of the man I am thinking of—accepting; and I want you to tell me whether everything you used to say and do in those days was sincere."

Hale did not exactly relish being compared to the man Miss Day was contemplating marrying, but he said, promptly enough: "Whatever I seemed to be to you, you may be sure I was. I always felt happy enough with you to be natural and true to the best that was in me. As well as I remember, I said everything to you

that crossed my mind. No woman ever had a better opportunity of judging of a man."

She nodded her head brightly. "So I supposed," she said softly; "and I judged you to be more in love than you were aware of."

"I believe," he said decidedly, "that I never really cared for Marion Van Buren at all. If she had not jilted me and married old Skelton, I would no doubt have married her, and been profoundly miserable."

Portia was thoughtful for a moment, and then said: "I am sure that you were in love, but you did not understand yourself. This man, whom I am, as I told you, considering, has been really in love with me a long time, but he is clinging to an absurd fancy of loyalty to another woman, and therefore has never had exactly the courage to speak. Now I have thought a great deal about him lately, and made up my mind to put him to the test. Give me your advice. Would you consider it unwomanly on my part if I were to take some means of showing him—that I care for him?"

"You are making things very difficult for me," said Hale, almost angrily. "How am I to advise you to show another man that you love him?"

There was dead silence for an instant between the two. Miss Day averted her face, and the objects in the Red Room—the artistic furniture, the ferns and roses, the window, with its view beyond—all seemed to define themselves with sudden clearness to her gaze, and a long time afterward it came over her just how in that moment Hale's face, full of intense repressed feeling, had appealed to her, as every line of his face, the fine brow, dark eyes, and strongly curved lips, were as well known to her as though she had been seeing them daily for the past six months; but she viewed them at this moment by the light of something different than she had known before.

"We have just ten minutes more to remain, I believe," the girl said, in a low voice, and laying one of her hands gently on Hale's arm. "Remember, you must

find Marion. She promised me to be here by quarter of one."

"I shall not look for her," said Hale.

"Remember," said Portia quickly, "what you told me once—that if she were a widow, you could trust yourself to meet her. Wait; let us go into the Blue Room, and if she is there, look at her from a distance before you speak."

They rose, and almost at the entrance of the room paused suddenly, for the lady they had come to seek was standing a few paces beyond—a tall, fair woman, with something queenly in her manner that made her distinguished in any place, and gave her now an air of importance even in this notable spot. Hale experienced a shock which seemed almost physical. What ghostly thing had he been cherishing all these years and calling it disappointed love? He turned to Portia, and almost laughed aloud.

"She is what she always was," he said joyously. "Portia, I thank you for bringing about this meeting: but listen to me. Do not ask me to counsel you in regard to this—other man. Let me tell you what I have had it in my heart and on my lips a dozen times to say."

But Portia's self-confidence had vanished. The girl was trembling and unnerved. Hale drew her back into the Red Room.

"Never mind where we are," he said hurriedly, "no one will hear us; and whatever you do or feel, you shall hear from my lips now that I love you. I would rather have you for my wife than any woman on God's earth, and——"

Portia's eyes were shining through a suspicious moisture. "Go," she said hastily, "speak to Marion, and then come back to me."

"I will not go until I can tell her you will be my wife," he said, almost roughly.

"If I let you tell her that," said Portia shyly, and lifting her sweet eyes to the young man's face, "will you forgive me for what I have done?—no, wait a min-

ute. I will confess my sins. Yesterday I heard that Marion was to be here, and I wanted you to meet her, but I determined to give you the chance first of finding out not only your own mind, but *mine*. I wanted it to be settled before you spoke to her."

The young man threw back his head and laughed joyously. "And so you invented the story of the young man whom you were considering?"

"Not at all. I assure you he was no invention; he was——"

"My stupid self? Is not that the case, my dearest?" He had her hands in his, and held them firmly.

She nodded her head at him. "That is precisely it. I am so glad you saw through it! But you must never, never remind me of it in a disagreeable way. Perhaps you think it was not a womanly thing to do."

"My dear," he said looking down at the girl's face, "do you know that I think the most womanly thing Juliet ever did was to let Romeo know that she loved him?"

Portia laughed. "You have forgotten, perhaps, that you told me this at Richmond. And that was what suggested my doing such a forward sort of thing. But you must be very certain you do not think me bold. And now you positively must go and speak to Marion. Only one thing: be sure not to call her Mrs. Skelton, because she—was married again last week. Her name is Davis."

Christmas is most appropriately a children's day all over the civilized world, but it is peculiarly so in Scandinavia. The following story of "Little Vigg" is characteristic of a very large class of such tales in the three tongues in which are written what is usually called "Scandinavian Literature." This pretty little tale is translated for ROMANCE by Lucie L. Whitlock from the Swedish of Victor Rydberg. The strong ethical tendency of the northern writers is also characteristically displayed in the high moral lessons enforced by subtle satire which little Vigg learns during his wonderful ride.

LITTLE VIGG.

THE snow lay shining over the moorland, and only one dwelling could be seen on all its vast expanse—a little cottage, old and gray. Travellers who passed over the moor often said, "How lonely the poor people must be who live there!"

But the cottage was a very nice one of its kind; moss grew all over the roof, protecting it from the cold and wind; the chimney was broad and strong, and the roof, with its thatch of turf, looked in summer like green velvet, covered with little red and yellow blossoms. At the end of the house was a tiny garden, where grew potatoes, carrots and cabbages; and by the fence were poppies and roses. Upon a bank close by stood an aspen tree, and at the cottage window hung a little curtain. The whole place was very neat and clean.

The cottage and the garden belonged to Mother Gertrude, who lived there alone with a little boy named Vigg, whom she had adopted.

Early in the morning of the day before Christmas, Mother Gertrude had started for the grocery in the village, which lay at a long distance over the moor. The sun was setting, but she was not at home yet, and Vigg was very lonely in the cottage—for there was perfect silence amid the vast snow-plain, which was all that he could see. All day long he had not heard the sound of a single horse's bell.

It was growing dark, and Vigg went to the stove, where the glowing wood was changing to ashes. All was so quiet that one could hear a pin fall. The sound of his little wooden shoes, as he walked across the floor, could have been heard outside the cottage. He sat down by the stove, feeling very dismal and lonely, and began to wonder if the gingerbread he was waiting for Mother Gertrude to bring had a head with golden horns, and four legs—and if little birds had any Christmas Eve.

It is hard to tell how long he had been sitting there, when he heard the bell of a horse, dashing over the snow. He sprang to the window and looked eagerly out, to see who could be coming, for he knew Mother Gertrude would not have any bells. The stars were lighted all over the heavens, and they twinkled and sparkled in the darkness of the night. Far away there was something very black on the snow. It came nearer and nearer, and the bells rang out louder and louder. Suddenly a sled drove up to the cottage and stopped at the window.

It was a sled with four horses, and the horses were smaller than any ponies Vigg had ever seen. The little man who drove them had pulled hard on the reins to stop them, and they were jumping and rearing and making the snow fly in every direction.

"Keep quiet, Rapp! Be still, Snapp! Nätt, stand quiet! Lätt, keep in your skin!" shouted the little man in the sled, as he jumped out and came to the window where Vigg was standing with eyes dilated with wonder. Vigg had never seen a man who looked like him—but then he had never seen many men. He was a little old man, just matching his horses in size. His face was full of wrinkles, and his whiskers were like white moss.

His clothes were of fur from head to foot, and in one side of his mouth he held a pipe, while the smoke came out of the other side.

"Good-evening, Pug Nose," he said.

Vigg answered, with some dignity, "Good-evening."

"Is anybody at home?" the man asked.

"You can see that I am at home."

"Yes, you are right. I was joking."

"It is all dark in the cottage, and it is Christmas Eve, but I shall have a Christmas fire and Christmas candles when Mother comes home—a candle with three branches."

"Oh, Mother Gertrude isn't home yet, and you are alone, and have to be for a good hour yet. Are you not afraid?"

"I am a Swedish boy," answered Vigg. Mother Gertrude had taught him that Swedish boys were always brave.

"Oh, you are a Swedish boy, are you!" said the little old man, rubbing his nose with his mittens, and taking the pipe from his mouth. "Do you know who I am?"

"No," said Vigg, "but do you know who *I* am?"

The old man took off his cap and made the boy a low bow.

"I have the honor of talking to Vigg," said he. "You are the great fighter of the country, and have just put on your first pair of trousers. You are not afraid of the largest whiskers in the world. You are Vigg, and I am Santa Claus. Have I the honor of being known to you?"

"Oh, you are Santa Claus! You must be a good man!" cried Vigg. "Mother has often spoken of you. Of course I know who you are."

"Thank you for your compliment," laughed Santa Claus. "You can't tell much about me from hearsay. Will you go out with me for a ride?"

"I would like to," said Vigg doubtfully, "but I can't, for Mother is not home yet, and if I am not here when she comes, what would she think?"

"You will be home before she gets back," Santa Claus answered. "Come along!"

Vigg sprang out. It was very cold, and Vigg was not dressed very warmly. His little sack was very tight, and his wooden shoes had made holes in his stockings. Santa Claus locked the door and lifted Vigg

into the sled, covered him up with a blanket, blew some smoke out of his pipe, cracked his whip, and off they flew.

Rapp and Snapp, Nätt and Lätt dashed over the snow fast as the wind, and the silver bells rang out sweetly and musically, sounding to little Vigg like bells from heaven.

They were very soon far away from the heath, and came to a dark wood. Mother Gertrude had told Vigg about this wood; the trees were so big and high that it seemed to him as if the stars were on the boughs. Sometimes between the trunks of the trees one could catch a glimmer of the lights from other houses. At last Santa Claus stopped his team before a little house.

"There are a good boy and girl here and others who must have some Christmas gifts," said Santa Claus.

Behind the seat in the sled was a chest, which Santa Claus now opened, and there were many things in it—an alphabet book, pencils, and a knife for the boy, a thimble, and a song-book for the girl, a bunch of thread and a spinning-wheel for the mother, and an almanac and a big clock for the father. Also there were two pairs of glasses for the grandfather and grandmother. And, besides all these things, Santa Claus had his hands full of something else, but Vigg could not see what it was, and he asked Santa Claus to tell him.

"These are blessings, my little friend," said Santa Claus.

Then he went into the cottage, and Vigg went with him. The family were all gathered around the Christmas tree, and the father was reading from the Bible about the Child Jesus. Santa Claus slipped his presents inside the door without their seeing him, and softly went back with Vigg to the sled. Then they started again through the dark wood.

"I like to hear of the child they were reading about," said Santa Claus, "but I like our old legend of Tor I Trudvaey, too."

"Who is Tor I Trudvaey?" asked Vigg.

"He was very good. He was a far-off relation of mine," answered Santa Claus. "He was very severe on bad people, but liked those who were honest and courageous. He liked the good farmers who worked hard to cultivate their land and train their sons to grow up to be good men. Once there was a war, and Tor I Trudvaey said to the farmers, 'Up, men, and defend your homes!' And they took their swords and shields and went over mountain and valley, and no enemies could stand against them. You shall be a good man, too, Vigg."

"Of course I will," said Vigg.

"And then," went on Santa Claus, "Tor laid his sword down at the feet of the Child Jesus, and he has never had to fight with it any more."

The next time Santa Claus stopped was at a farmer's barn. From the barn came the noise of thrashing wheat, as loud as the rushing of a river playing with stones and the roots of trees. Santa Claus knocked at the opening in the shutter, and the door sprang open. Inside were two funny little dwarfs, with bushy eyebrows and round cheeks. They had on red caps and little gray coats. They beat the wheat so that the dust flew in clouds over their heads. Santa Claus nodded and said:

"Brownie, brownie, brownie man, are you still at work?"

And the brownies answered as they slung their flails:

"The flail makes plenty of noise, and we have a big pile of wheat here."

"You might take it easy on Christmas Eve," said Santa Claus.

But the dwarfs replied,

"We have a great deal of wheat here to make into bread, and every minute is worth gold."

"Well, I hope you know where and when our meeting is to be," said Santa Claus.

The dwarfs nodded and said:

"Yes, a little while hence, with the great king in

the mountain. Now farewell, dear Santa Claus, till then."

After a while Santa Claus stopped in front of a big building, from every window of which shone a bright light. He found many presents for this house when he opened his chest, so many that Vigg wondered and marvelled at them. There were bracelets, necklaces, veils, and buckles, and silk, and velvet, and gold, and silver, and all sorts of precious stones.

"What are all these for?" he asked.

"They are for fishes," said Santa Claus, with a wink. "For the young ladies to catch fishes."

"But what is that?" inquired Vigg, pointing to a large golden star.

"That," said Santa Claus, "is for the master of the house to wear on his breast. It is for the fishers, too."

Vigg was puzzled, and could not understand at all what he meant. He had never seen fishers wear such things.

Then Santa Claus gave Vigg some fruit-stones to put in his pockets, which made them both invisible, and they walked up the broad staircase.

The father was sitting in a large arm-chair, with his hands folded before him, and his eyes half-shut, thinking what a great man he was and how much he knew.

Santa Claus distributed his presents, and the old gentleman was very dignified and stately during the process, but when he saw the star, his stateliness vanished.

Santa Claus gave him the star, and told him it was a present from the king. He bowed and smiled and was profuse in his thanks, and talked of the king's great kindness, murmuring that he was most unworthy of such favor. Then he went into the next room where he thought nobody could see him, and stood in front of the glass to fasten the star on his breast. Then his dignity vanished, and he danced about a little, making a courtesy to himself and saying, "Now at last I have what I have longed for. That is what we get for being good children."

"Is he a child?" whispered Vigg in amazement.

"Yes, indeed he is," answered Santa Claus.

Now they went to the king's palace, which was much larger than even the last fine house.

"Here are a couple of presents for the prince," said Santa Claus. "We will soon finish here, and then we will go to the mountain, and then home to Mother Gertrude on the heath."

Once more he opened the chest, and Vigg saw all the wonderful things he took out. On a big silver platter stood 2,000 warriors on horseback and on foot, drilling, turning to the right and left, and the horses were rearing and the riders waving their swords. On another silver platter was the ocean, with ships upon it, and guns pointing from the ships, so that, when Santa Claus turned a wheel, they shot at a castle, which also bristled with guns. But the third of the silver platters was the best of all. There sat the king on his throne, and in front of him stood a wise man and his buglers, and next to them was a mill, and on the other side of the mill a crowd of people, some of whom were cutting wheat, and there were tailors and weavers, and smiths and shoemakers, with their wives and children. Then Santa Claus pulled a little wheel, and the king said, "I need some more warriors." Then he gave a nod to the wise man, and he gave one to the buglers, and they blew through their bugles, saying, "The emperor in the moon will take our kingdom." When the people heard that, the thrashers sprang up with their bunches of wheat, and the smiths with their iron, and the weavers with their cloth, the tailors with their clothes, and the shoemakers with their shoes—they ran to the mill and threw it all in under the grindstones. When, lo! an army of warriors sprang from under the stones, all armed and ready to battle for the king. With these playthings Santa Claus hastened up to the prince, and back again, for his horses Rapp and Snapp, and Nätt and Lätt were rearing and prancing with impatience.

Santa Claus mounted his sled, and away they went again through the dark wood.

"Now we are going to see the Mountain King," said Santa Claus.

Vigg was very quiet and thoughtful for awhile. Then he asked anxiously, "Is your chest empty now?"

"Pretty nearly," said Santa Claus, as he put his pipe in his mouth.

"You have presents for all the rest. Haven't you any for me?" asked Vigg plaintively.

"Oh, you need not be afraid I shall forget you," laughed Santa Claus. "Your present is at the bottom of the chest."

"Oh, please show it to me!" Vigg pleaded.

"Can't you wait till you get home to-morrow?" asked Santa Claus.

"No, no, let me see it now," said Vigg.

"There it is," answered his companion, turning around to his chest, and pulling from it a pair of thick woollen stockings.

"Is that all?" asked Vigg.

"Aren't you glad to have them?" replied Santa Claus. "You know there are holes in the ones you have on."

"Yes, but Mother Gertrude could have mended them. You give the prince such fine things, I think you might have something pretty for me, too."

Santa Claus did not say a word, but he laid the stockings back in the chest, and blew long whiffs of smoke from his pipe, and looked very thoughtful.

No one spoke a word for a long while, and Vigg's thoughts were full of envy. He was angry that the prince should have had such beautiful things, and only the woollen stockings were given to him.

Then they came to a great mountain, with a high, straight wall of rock, and Santa Claus stopped the sled and got out, and gave an oat cake to each of the four horses, Rapp and Snapp, and Nätt and Lätt. Then, taking Vigg by the hand, he knocked at the mountain wall. It opened before them, and they went in.

They had taken only a few steps when Vigg became very much frightened, for the inside of the mountain seemed to be a dreadful place. It would have been as black as night but for the light which shone from the eyes of the snakes and toads which were crawling on the walls and in the damp recesses among the stones.

"I want to go home to mother," said Vigg.

"I thought you were a Swedish boy," replied Santa Claus. And Vigg did not say a word.

"How do you like toads—that one, for instance?" asked Santa Claus, after they had gone on a little further. He pointed to a green animal which was siting on a stone, with its round eyes staring at the boy.

"It is dreadful!" faltered Vigg.

"*You* had the toad brought here," replied Santa Claus. "Do you see how puffed up he is? That is from envy. You see you wished that you had the prince's gifts and didn't like the present I gave you. A snake or a toad comes here for every bad thought that enters into any one's heart."

"I am very sorry," said Vigg; "it was very naughty and ugly of me and I am ashamed."

They went on and on, through many crooked roads, deeper and deeper into the mountains. After awhile it began to grow lighter, and at last they turned a corner and came into a grand hall. The walls were made of mountain crystals, which glittered brilliantly in the light of torches held by innumerable dwarfs, who were ranged around three sides of the great hall. The light shining through the crystals lighted it with all the colors of the rainbow.

On the fourth side of the hall was the king in his golden chair, dressed in ermine and velvet, sprinkled with precious stones, but his face was very grave and thoughtful.

Beside him sat his daughter, all dressed in silver gauze, most beautiful to look upon. She was pretty, but very, very pale, and seemed to be dying.

In the middle of the hall hung a huge pair of scales,

and around the scales stood a great many dwarfs, laying weights—now on one side, and now on the other.

In front of the king stood a great crowd of brownies from all the houses and cottages for miles around. They told the king where they lived, and what they and their masters had thought and said and done during the last year. For every good thought and every good thing of which they spoke, the dwarfs laid a golden weight on one side of the scales, and for every bad thought and every bad thing, they laid a toad or a snake in the other scale.

"Vigg," said Santa Claus, "that beautiful princess is very sick, and if she does not get out of the mountain soon she will die. She longs for the air of heaven and the sunlight and the sight of the golden stars in the sky. She has been promised that she should see the starry heavens and the angels, and be happy forever. She longs for it all, but she cannot leave the mountain until some Christmas Eve when the scale of good deeds and words shall be weighed down to the floor, and that with the evil shall go up to the ceiling. You see now the scales are just even."

Scarcely had Santa Claus said this, when he was summoned before the king. He had a great deal to speak of, and it was nearly all good, for he worked only at Christmas-time when people are almost always kind and friendly toward each other. The dwarfs laid many, many golden weights on the scale while Santa Claus was talking, and the side with them in it grew heavier and heavier.

While Santa Claus was speaking, Vigg was on pins and needles, dreading to hear his own name pronounced. When at last it came, he turned first red and then pale. What Santa Claus said about him and about the woollen stockings, I will not repeat, but the dwarf laid in the scale, on the side of the bad things, the dreadful toad that Vigg had seen in the stones. The toad was heavy, and every eye but that of Santa Claus was turned upon the little boy. The king and the princess, the dwarfs and the brownies, were all looking at him. Some of

the glances were hard and severe, and others full of compassion and sorrow, especially those of the beautiful princess, whose gaze was so mild and pitiful that Vigg covered his face with his hands, for he felt bitterly ashamed.

Santa Claus told about poor Mother Gertrude on the moor—how she had taken the little fatherless and motherless Vigg, and cared for him, and how she made mittens, and rugs, and brooms, and sold them to the grocer in the village in order to feed him; how willing she was to mend his clothes and do everything for him; how much she loved him and how little thought she had for herself, happy in his rosy cheeks and bright eyes, and always ready to forgive even his disobedience; how earnestly she prayed for him every night before she went to sleep, and how only this very morning she had walked alone over the snow to the village, just to get a Christmas tree and other little things for him. While Santa Claus was telling all this, the dwarfs laid heavy golden weights in the scale of the good things, and the ugly green toad jumped down and disappeared, and the eyes of the beautiful princess were wet with tears and Vigg was sobbing.

Yes, he was sobbing in his sleep, and the grand hall with its crystal walls and brilliant lights was gone, and Vigg was lying on his little bed in the cottage on the moor.

The Christmas fire was burning brightly in the stove, and by the bed stood Mother Gertrude, saying, "Poor little Vigg! You had to be all alone here for a long time with no light, but I could not get home sooner. Now I have the candle for you and *such* a candle as it is! And bread, and gingercake, and another cake for you to give to the sparrows to-morrow morning. And see here," added Mother Gertrude, "here is a pair of woollen stockings, which I have made for you for your Christmas present. They are just what you need, and here is a pair of leather shoes, so that you need not wear your wooden ones on Christmas Day."

Vigg had long wished to have a pair of leather shoes,

and they made him very happy. He looked at them from all sides, but he looked so much longer at the woollen stockings that Mother Gertrude thought he was looking for some flaw in her work. The truth was that they were exactly like those that Santa Claus had had in his chest, and they made Vigg very thoughtful.

He threw his arms around Mother Gertrude's neck, and said:

"Thank you, Mother Gertrude, for the shoes and the stockings—many times over for the stockings."

Now Mother Gertrude placed the pot on the fire, and a white cover on the table, and the candle was lighted, and Vigg put on his new shoes and the woollen stockings. Sometimes he ran to the window and looked out on the wide, snowy moor, and wondered about last night, how it was that he got home, and when. Santa Claus had been very kind to him, and so was dear Mother Gertrude, and Christmas Eve was the most delightful time in all the world.

Outside the little cottage the rays of the stars streamed down on the snow-covered heath, and within the one little dwelling on that lonely moor reigned the warmth of the little hearth, and light and gladness; and two happy hearts enjoyed them.

Women at the time of the Revolution had little chance to meddle with affairs outside of their homes. Still, now and then one was found who dared to venture forth in especial behalf of her country. Such an one was the heroine of the following story, which was written for the New York *Mail and Express* by Silence Pemberton.

PATRIOTIC DOROTHEA.

A LONG, dark hall. The portraits of two old persons that frowned down from the walls as though resenting the modern innovations below; a soft, thick carpet under foot, so old that its colors had all faded to a dull, uniform red; a low window with tiny, diamond-shaped panes, letting in more gloom than light; a small, iron-bound chest in a dark corner; heavy, smothering hangings—these were the belongings of this long, dark hall.

A door opened softly, and a modern innovation entered in the shape of a girl about sixteen years old. A soft light seemed to dispel the gloom. It could not have been her dress—that was dark gray. Her brown hair curled waywardly around a sweet, roguish-looking face. Her straight eyebrows were drawn down into a dark frown. She seemed rather ashamed of what she was going to do.

She moved toward a door, hesitated a moment, and, bending her head, looked in at the keyhole. She sees a library with books, and more books piled up to the ceiling. At a table sits an old man, energetically pointing out some spot on a map before him to another man who is bending over it.

"You have two courses before you," said Master Hathaway. "You may go to Concord, capture our stores, confound us—we are bright men, but a little setback like that takes the wit out of our heads—then, while we are in dire confusion, you can fall upon us and win the day. Or you can act like gentlemen, and fight us face to face like men. Take your choice."

"I will see what General Gage says," returned the visitor. "By night, of course."

"You ass!" returned Master Hathaway contemptuously, "I should like to see you get out of Boston without a row by daylight!" and he began rolling up the maps.

Mistress Dorothea promptly fled to her own room and locked herself in.

"What shall I do?" she asked of the pretty maiden she saw in the mirror. "Are you going to stand up and scream, 'My Uncle Gaspar is a British spy?' Well, my dear, that is all the sense I gave you credit for. What would Priscilla say? Why need I say anything about Uncle Gaspar? Why can't I go and tell John Farden to tell Joseph Warren? Ah! I've got it now," and she proceeded to act upon it.

First, she opened her door. Then she drew down the curtains. Then she groaned. Then she flung herself on her bed with more groans. Then she tossed from side to side and groaned again.

"Dorothea," said a quiet voice at the door, "is thee in pain?"

A groan.

Master Hathaway came in and laid his cool hand upon his niece's forehead.

"Poor child," he said, tenderly; "thee has one of thy headaches. I will go away and let thee sleep," and he went away, closing the door softly after him.

No sooner had his soft steps died away than Dorothea sprang off the bed, slipped off her shoes and shot the bolt in the door. She listened and then pulled up her curtains and looked out. It was toward dusk, and in a quarter-of-an-hour she could leave the house in safety to see John Farden.

Dorothea's bosom friend was a red-hot rebel who had inspired Dorothea with a love for everything that was not British. As Master Hathaway never expressed an opinion upon the war, his niece supposed he was neutral, or too much engrossed in his beloved library to trouble himself concerning it. But Hannah, her old nurse and

Master Hathaway's housekeeper, had confided to our heroine that the gentleman upstairs was a Briton. Dorothea had indignantly denied it and gone to see.

When it was sufficiently dark, Mistress Hathaway opened her window and looked out. A large cherry-tree grew close by it, and often had she climbed up and down with Priscilla. She could descend with her eyes shut, she knew, yet a feeling of some sort deterred her. She felt that she was betraying her uncle, and the thought was odious. But she strengthened her mind with the remembrance of other Hathaways, dead and gone, who had sacrificed their homes and everything they held dear to their king, who afterward hung them for treason.

This seemed to give her great courage, for she sat upon the window-sill with her feet outside, seized hold of a branch with both hands, gave a little spring, and immediately she was standing in a crotch of the tree. Getting down was an easy matter, and she was on the ground in a twinkling and off at a run for Priscilla Farden's. She would see John Farden in the garden and tell him that she had heard that the British were coming to seize the stores.

As she slowly skirted the house, she saw, to her great delight, a light in Priscilla's room. She flung a pebble against the window and waited. A shadow crossed the white curtain, and a short interval passed, during which Dorothea danced with impatience. Then the front door opened silently and a girl rushed out.

"I knew it was you, you dear old thing!" she cried, as she kissed our heroine. "What does possess you to come here at this time of the night?"

"I want to see Lieutenant Farden," said Dorothea quietly.

"He has gone out to dinner," replied Priscilla with kindly impetuosity. "Come in and see me, there's a dear. He will be back in an hour or two."

But Dorothea had been making her plans; she must disguise herself and go to see Joseph Warren.

"Has John worn his uniform?" she said quietly.

Priscilla looked at her with surprise.

"No, it is upstairs. Dorothea, you aren't going to dressing? What for? Oh, do tell me! Where are you going?"

"I can't tell you," said Dorothea calmly. "It is a secret. Yes, I will dress up in John's uniform."

Priscilla was too much astonished to speak, so she led the way upstairs without a word. Silently she laid the uniform out upon the bed. Silently she tied her friend's hair as a queue and showered powder upon it. And then her admiration broke out as Dorothea stood before the glass outlining a shadowy mustache upon her pretty lip with burnt cork.

"Dorothea Hathaway!" exclaimed Priscilla, "you are perfectly superb. Won't you tell me where you are going?"

"No," said the young soldier, with a stiff bow. "Good-night, Mistress Farden."

When Dorothea arrived at Joseph Warren's house, she was horrified at beholding it brilliantly lighted. She remembered Priscilla's remark that her brother had gone out to dine. Oh, what an idiot she had been not to know that he had come here, for Warren was his best friend! Why didn't she write him? Why didn't she with ordinary sense leave a letter for him with Priscilla?

All that was too late now, and she desperately went up the steps and knocked. The door was thrown open and a servant appeared.

"Tell Mr. Warren that I should like to speak with him," said Dorothea majestically, and the servant vanished very much impressed, only to return with the dread announcement:

"Mr. Warren says will you please step into the dining-room?"

Poor Dorothea! What pen can describe her sensations at being suddenly conducted into a large room, with twenty gentlemen, some drinking wine, and all looking at her. She knew almost every one by sight, and many of them intimately.

"Well?" said Warren inquiringly.

"I would like to see you alone," she replied grandly.

"Speak out. We are all friends here," said John Farden.

So the girl spoke. "The British are going to Concord to capture our stores. I don't know when, but they are going."

A torrent of questions poured out upon her, in the midst of which she made her escape. The result of her work was soon evident. The Americans began removing their stores, and the battle of Lexington was fought on April 19th, 1775.

If John Farden recognized Dorothea in her disguise, he kept his own counsel. After the war was over and he had a wife of his own he said to her one day:

"Dorothea, do you remember that soldier who came to us one night at Joseph Warren's?"

And sweet Mistress Farden looked up and then down, turned red and then white, and murmured:

"O John! Who told you?"

This vivid, bewildering picture, from the Detroit *Free Press*, no doubt voices the remembrance which many soldiers have had of battles in which they were wounded.

IN THE BATTLE.

We had been held in reserve for five long hours while cannon thundered and muskets crackled spitefully along the front a mile away. A procession of dead and wounded had filed past us until we were sick with horror. Shot and shell and bullet had fallen upon us behind the woods until the dry, dead grass bore many a stain of blood.

"Attention! Forward—guide right—march!"

Our brigade was going in at last, and there was a look of relief on the face of every officer and man as we got the word.

"Guide right—front—forward march!"

As we swung clear of the woods, a gust of wind raised the smoke for a minute, and I saw the plain in our front blue with dead and wounded. Away beyond them was a line of earthworks, and I had one swift glimpse of a thin, blue line kneeling behind the cover.

"Steady! Right dress! Double quick—march!"

The air is alive with the ping of bullets and the whizz and shriek of shot and shell. We bend our heads as if breasting a fierce gale laden with icy pellets. There is a wild cry—a shriek—a groan, as men are struck and fall to the earth, but no one heeds them—no one hesitates. It is a hurricane of death, but we feel a wild exultation in breasting it. Men shout, curse, sing, swing their hats, and cheer.

We are driving through the smoke-cloud when there is a flash of fire in front. I seem to rise into the air and float hither and thither, and the sensation is so dreamy and full of rest that I wish it could last forever. It is suddenly broken by the sound of a voice. Is it my

voice? It sounds strange and afar off to me. Why should I cheer and curse by turns? What has happened?

Ah! now I come back to earth again! Above and around me is the smoke—the earth trembles under the artillery—men are lying about and beside me. Where is the brigade? Why did I drop out? I am lying on my back, and struggle to sit up again. There is red, fresh blood on the grass—on my hands—on my face. I taste it on my lips as my parched tongue thrusts itself out in search of moisture.

Who is groaning? Who is shrieking? Who is cheering? And why should I laugh and exult? Have we held the line against a grand charge? Did we scatter and decimate the legions hurled against us? Have we won a victory to be flashed over the country and cause the bells to ring with gladness? Let me think. Give me time to remember how it all happened. Strange that my thoughts should be so confused, and the desire to sleep be so strong upon me when I should be up and doing. I will shake it off. I will spring up and follow on after the brigade. Here——"

. . . . . .

"How do you feel?"

My eyes are wide open, and I am lying on a cot in a large room. I see people walking about—other people lying on cots like my own.

"I feel all right. Why?"

"You were hard hit in the battle four days ago, my boy."

"So there was a battle?"

"Yes."

"And I was wounded?"

"Had your left arm shattered by a piece of shell, and we had to amputate it."

No doubt the very interesting animal whose virtues and vagaries form the theme of this charming sketch, is a direct descendant of that marked cat which laid the foundation of Whittington's wealth. He is probably also a near relative of Mr. Charles Dudley Warner's immortal "Calvin." "Ingomar's" historian is Helen Bartlett Bridgman, and his story was first printed in the Brooklyn *Standard-Union*.

A DAINTY VAGRANT.

My first interview with Ingomar was in the nature of a surprise. At least, it was a surprise to me, though I fancy that on his part it was the result of a carefully laid plan—his shrewd little cat head must have told him that some one who dwelt in this particular house was particularly susceptible to feline charms. From my earliest years I have never been able to resist the luxurious curves, the soft, furry warmth, the affectionate ways, the rich, grateful purr, that belong to the best examples of pussydom.

Still, it must be confessed that a well-kept country cat is one thing, a vagrant city cat quite another.

But Ingomar took his chances, and, like all the brave, conquered the fair.

It was one of those mornings in early May, so indescribably luminous, balmy and fragrant, even in the great noisy town, the kind of a morning to inspire man to put on new wings in the struggle for existence, and to cause a latent hope to spring up even in the breast of despair.

I stepped from the library into the parlor, for the purpose of letting in a flood of sunshine, when out of the murky depths of the room softly toward me crept a dark object, conspicuously heralded by a patch of white.

My amazement knew no bounds; but pussy's faith in me knew no bounds, either. He came on and on, with a noiseless, deprecating tread and head lowered

as if to receive just punishment, yet with a tender confidence in his eyes which would have melted the heart of a graven image. And when a beautiful and helpless animal is in question, I am no graven image.

It was a beautiful animal, indeed, with a dark gray coat stretching without a break from the eyes to the tip of the tail. Behind the ears were five regular black stripes, which formed a little head-dress not unlike that worn by Juliet in the play. Now and then, in effective places, these black stripes were repeated, giving a deeper tone to the dark gray coat. The paws were covered with white mittens, the little terra-cotta nose rose out of a bed of purest white, and under the chin was a broad white collar as perfect as if made to order. In the lovely gray-green eyes shone an expression which was animal rather than human only in its enduring gratitude and faith.

For I had taken the pretty thing in my arms, and made much of him, and was loath to let him go. He curled up into a soft ball, and gently pressed me with his paws of velvet, while his whole being trembled with the ardor of his happy purr. But, alas! the street was his home, and after an hour or more I had to bid him good-by. Yet, as he lingered on the threshold, I fancied he said to me, with a bow most polite, quite as if he might have come from Paris:

"It shall not be 'adieu;' let us say only 'au revoir.'"

A week or more passed when, as we sat at dinner one evening, we heard a plaintive wail outside. It was not the rasping "miouw" of the ordinary discontented cat; but a gently importunate appeal, as though addressed to a friend. At the same time I recognized the wonderful white collar, pressed against the window pane.

He was allowed to come in, and ran straight to me, with the joy of recognition shining in his eyes. I offered him something to eat, but he passed by the food to rub against the hand that dispensed it. It was then I said very truly, though a cruel audience laughed, and I have never heard the last of it:

"It is not meat he wants, but human affection."

Indeed, in the strength of his attachments, he reminded me of a dog. He would spring a foot from the floor to receive a caress from my hand, and if I stooped down to talk to him, directly he would creep into my arms. Once in a while he would lap my hands or face, that highest of compliments from catland. Possibly it was not the most agreeable, but he meant it kindly, and I would not have objected for worlds. It was his most delicate way of showing how "simpatica" he thought me to be.

After that first night he came quite often to dinner, and behaved like a gentleman, too, seeming to care little for the food, but much for the attention that accompanied it—something that cannot be said of every guest. He did not take up his abode with us, but he made frequent and prolonged visits, and in various ways manifested his friendly regard. Though he seemed to belong to nobody in particular, he yet affected our neighborhood, perhaps because of certain noble old maples which render our street almost like a park. This extensive greenery may have reminded Ingomar of some rural home which had once formed his happy portion.

Though only a street cat, he showed himself nice in his habits, keeping his fur glossy and clean, and evincing a self-respect beyond his station. His beauty proved him to be of good blood, and his manners betrayed that he once was somebody's pet, for blood and training will tell, you know.

To see him do the most trivial thing, like getting an oyster out of a deep bowl by means of his pretty paws, was a liberal education. In fact, he possessed all the attributes which among men command success. He never wasted himself in fruitless endeavor, nor did he fall into the mistake of retreat.

I never could sufficiently admire his delicacy in the acceptance of our hospitality. He showed plainly that it was our society he craved, rather than our bed and board. Never once did he make a convenience of us.

In this respect he might have taught a lesson to many a country cousin.

Ingomar stood by us throughout the summer. His wise little head observed the exodus which takes place when the sun grows high, and he as well as we came to the conclusion that our cool city was about as comfortable a July retreat as could be found. It was evident that he was an aristocratic cat, who valued comfort above crowds.

In September, when the town was filling up again, we found our way to the woods. All through the autumn days, the lakes, the leaves, the fields, the everlasting hills are at their best. The tints are something maddening, the air like a nectar prepared by the gods, the peace so profound that we penetrate to Nature's very heart. It was with laggard steps we left it all behind.

When my eyes fell once more upon my home, I remembered Ingomar. It seems that he had disappeared soon after our exit, and had not been seen since. Five weeks had passed without a glimpse of him.

In fact, we had quite given him up, when, on a bleak November afternoon, as I opened the door to go out, he rushed up the steps and into the house. But he was so changed that I hardly knew him, with fur soiled and torn, eyes strained and watery, and one long tooth gone.

It was with difficulty that I forced myself to caress him. He was actually an object of repulsion—our once beautiful Ingomar. The small boy had done his deadly work.

You see, one of these young terrors happened to come into the house, following the cat up the steps, and that was how I found out. He did not belong to me, or I might have been disconcerted by the effect he produced on Ingomar, who began running round and round, as if he were mad. The boy made a dash for him, when the once gentle pussy scratched and fought like a tiger, and finally succeeded in inflicting a rather bad wound. After this there was nothing to be done but to eject him from the house.

That time he seemed gone "for good." The seasons came and went, and I thought of him often, but as we think of the dead. I regretted that my last remembrance of him could not have been a sweeter one, as we regret that our last vision of some dear loved one should be marred by the devastation wrought by long illness. Many times I tried to conjure him up as he had first appeared to me, winning my heart instantly by his beauty and air of high breeding. But, alas! I could call up only that torn coat, those distorted eyes.

It was fully a year after that dreadful day. The small boy had disappeared from our immediate vicinity, to tease cats and shatter windows in a more congenial clime. With him had also disappeared the formidable policeman who had kept anxious watch over our barrels and our glass. The avenue seemed almost like a village street.

Again it was November. The gas was lighted and the curtains half drawn. Somebody called attention to the persistent mewing of a cat without. I looked up and caught a glimpse of white fur.

You may smile, but my heart leaped. A friend, even a cat friend, is not made every day. I had missed Ingomar more than I would confess.

He bounded into my arms, and then out of them again; rushed up to each member of the family, and gave effusive greeting; and finally rubbed against furniture in lieu of human beings. Not only did he remember us, but he talked to us in his old way, a sort of chirrup, which we were at no loss to understand. Then, when greetings were well over, he threw himself at full length on the floor, his little white mittens pawing the air, his eyes swimming with joy.

Not only had his old beauty returned, but his curves were enough to drive one distracted. The fascination of curves is something to be withstood by neither angel nor devil. He subjugated every living soul, from mistress down to cook.

How I wished he could really talk, and tell us of something more than his affection—of those wonderful

travels of his, since last he fled from us in a delirium of terror. What adventures must have been his, what battles for life, what narrow escapes, what thrilling conquests! The wisdom learned in the hard school of experience shone out of his intelligent eyes, but could not proceed from his poor dumb little lips.

Strange that the privilege possessed by the veriest fool should be denied to the noblest beast! Therein lies the real tragedy of high animal life—the inability to express in words what is felt in the heart. At least, so it seems to a woman.

This time Ingomar had come to stay. He seemed quite satisfied with sundry cushioned corners in the interior of our dwelling, and went outside only to air himself in the back yard. His days were full of sunshine and peace.

Yet he had a good memory. For instance, nothing would tempt him to venture into the street. Even the sight of it would excite him beyond measure. When I first took him to the front windows, he would spring from me like a little demon, and, crouching low, seek the farthest corner of the room. If I followed him, he would shrink into a heap, and lower his head as if for a blow—that motion so provocative of delight to the small boy, so pathetic in its appeal to one of greater years and tenderer heart.

Little by little, I taught him to be less afraid of the big outer world. At least, he was willing to gaze upon it from a distance, safely sheltered in my arms. But his little heart would beat fast even while the happy purr was sounding. He had confidence in me; but he was not sure that we might not both be overcome. The utmost persuasion would never tempt him even a couple of inches outside. He had learned his lesson well.

As the bright spring came on, he would manifest a provoking tendency to disappear for a day or two at a time, but always over the back fence. The blocks in our neighborhood are so long that the inclosures in the rear, each with its tree or flower or vine, look more like

a pleasant park than a collection of back yards. Over this enchanted space Ingomar would roam at his own sweet will, and he would come home looking anything but nice, with the gloss all off his handsome coat and his mittens covered with dirt. I was disappointed in him, and alarmed at his choice of companions, who seemed far from genteel. But he persisted in his wayward course, regarding my remonstrances with great indifference. The only sure remedy was the cellar.

As he lived longer and longer with us, I became more and more attached to him. Of course, I spoiled him, and he showed himself extremely human, in that what at first he had been humbly grateful for as a privilege, he eventually demanded as a right. Still, he was so fascinating, even in his autocracy, that I could refuse him nothing.

But there was one who never cared for him, who ignored him entirely—the master.

When Ingomar observed this, he seemed thoughtful and oppressed. He would leave his adorers at any moment to haggle for the notice of the one who loved him not. All the beauties of his coat, collar, and mittens, all his rare curves and graceful movements, he displayed in vain. He purred and chirruped so seductively, he rolled himself into a delicious, soft, inert mass on the master's very knees—only to be betrayed. Something very like a slap, or at best a push, sent him flying to the floor. Yet, strange to say, he cared more for the fleeting touch of a finger from him who was so difficult to win than for all the worship accorded him without stint. For thus is constituted the masculine heart.

But Ingomar was not to delight us with his very human ways for long. As soon as he had become an integral part of our home, and it seemed as if we never could do without him, he sickened and died. It is either the boon or the bane of animal life that it is apt to be short.

First came a little cough, then a disinclination for food, accompanied by extreme lassitude. No longer did he bid for our admiration with his agile movements,

but lay for hours in one spot, fixing upon us a gaze touching in its appeal, for I doubt not he knew he was going to die. Just as he had obtained a genuine haven of rest, he was to be seized by some power greater even than the pitiless small boy and be hurled into the awful unknown.

When in health, an animal, even one highly intelligent, unlike man, lives only for the hour. But I do think that when smitten by illness a strange foreboding masters its being. It recognizes the transitory nature of things earthly.

Certainly, the cat seemed possessed by a profound melancholy, and would search my eyes with an expression which it was difficult to meet. The physician knows well what this look means, and so do all who have watched by the bedside of the dying. It tells always of the beginning of the end.

When Ingomar stayed out through a long shower, not heeding in the least the wet, which is usually so distasteful to the whole feline tribe, I knew he was doomed.

The next day, one of those April wonders which bear within their deceptive sunshine all the languorous beauty of the heart of June, the end came. Under the full blaze of the sun, upon a bed of hyacinths already exhaling delicious perfume, with his paws folded under him in what we used to call his attitude of prayer, our pet passed away.

You may scoff, but there can be a solemnity, a deep sense of loss, even in the death of a cat. Love is such a strange thing. The most brilliant mind within one's ken can leave one cold, while a helpless animal may nestle close to the heart.

The author of the following story, Laura E. Starr, would hardly like, we dare say, to vouch for its actual truth. Indeed, if she did this, it might not be admissible to these pages; although we are prepared to maintain that real life is often as rich in romance as are the pages of fiction. The adventure might have happened, however, and every bicyclist who reads it will shudder as he imagines himself in the hero's place. The story first appeared in the *Yankee Blade*.

BICYCLE VS. TIGER.

I WAS always very fond of bicycling, and from the time when I was a small boy and labored for hours with a bone-shaker to the days when I became the proud possessor of one of the first bicycles ever made, I revelled in the enchanting pastime, spending hours, which should have been otherwise occupied, on the back of my iron horse, thus putting my physical powers a long way ahead of my mental. In fact I hated the sight of a book, and was never happy unless scouring the country on my bicycle. My father was a doctor in a Kentish village, and, having a large family, he was thankful indeed when, at the age of nineteen, a commission was obtained for me by a wealthy friend in a regiment about to sail for India.

A grand new bicycle was my father's parting present, and great was my delight at finding that another young "sub" in my regiment was also a bicyclist. In these days when the "iron wheel" has so many votaries, this may seem nothing strange; but to realize my surprise and pleasure, you must remember that a bicycle was then a comparative curiosity, and a bicyclist a person to be stared at and admired, or otherwise. Our bicycles were, I believe, the first ever seen in India; and as we rode together in the town, some days after our arrival, one would have thought it was the triumphal entry of some Eastern potentate.

I could fill a book with the curious incidents and acci-

dents which befell us going "up country." Our regiment was always on the move, and panics of one kind or another were very frequent on our bicycling excursions.

One evening after mess Fred and I signed articles to ride a ten-mile race.

There was a grand native road within a short distance of our camp, running away for ten miles as flat as a drawing-board. It lay through the open plain, and then a deserted track was reached, becoming wilder as the road proceeded, and finally swallowing it up in an impenetrable jungle. It was on this road I intended to train. Bent had found a circular path round some native huts a short way from the station, measuring about six laps to the mile, and there he prepared himself for the coming struggle.

After a week of such training as would make a modern athlete's hair stand on end—meat almost raw, chopped very finely; little drinks of neat brandy, etc.—we considered ourselves fit for the contest; and the adventure I am about to relate occurred the evening before the eventful day. I was just starting for a last ride over my favorite course, when an officer stopped me and said:

"Have you heard of the tiger, Harvie?"

"No," I answered.

"The natives have just brought word that some tiger is marked down in the jungle about ten miles from here; so don't go too far this evening."

"All right," I laughed; "I think a tiger would find it a difficult matter to catch me—my training would tell on him."

I had not seen any large wild beast as yet, and my notion of a tiger was a thin, sleepy-looking animal, such as I had once seen in a travelling menagerie. Away I rode, my comrade's caution forgotten before I had gone a mile.

I started at a good pace, but not racing, as I intended to do all I knew coming home. In about an hour I reached my usual halting-place, ten miles from the camp; but this being the last night of my training, I

made up my mind to ride another couple of miles, and then do the whole distance back at my best pace.

I rode on, and in another ten minutes found myself in the jungle.

Now for the race home.

Dismounting, I oiled my machine, tightened up every screw, and then sat down on a boulder to rest and enjoy the prospect. A beautiful scene it was too.

Above me rose the grand mountains, their snowy tops blushing crimson in the setting sun; here, a waterfall, like a thread of gold and silver, flashing down the mountain-side, and twining in and out among the masses of trees and rocks; there, a glimpse of fairyland through a jungle vista.

A post, or "tank," as it is called, was surrounded by dense foliage, festooned by parasitical climbing plants, glowing with flowers of every imaginable hue; humming-birds, like fiery gems, flashed hither and thither, darting in and out among the trees. On the "tank" floated water-fowl of every kind, and the banks were alive with gorgeous birds, their plumage rivalling the flowers in brilliancy and variety of color. But now the shadows were deepening, the crimson on the mountain tops had disappeared, and the cold snow began to look gray and ghastly. A flying fox went rustling past me, and I hastily prepared to mount; for there is scarcely any twilight in India, and I knew it would soon be dark.

As I rose, my eyes encountered something which made me start and nearly drop my bicycle.

There, not forty yards off, was a tiger. I knew the animal well enough; but how different he looked from the lean, half-starved little beast I had seen at home! He had just come into the open space from a dense jungle-brake, and sat there washing his face and purring in a contented sort of way, like a huge cat.

Was I frightened? Not an atom; I had my bicycle and a start of forty yards, so if I could not beat him, it was a pity.

He had not seen me yet and I stood for another min-

ute admiring the handsome creature, and then quietly mounted (the tiger was directly on my right, while the road stretched away in front of me). The noise I made roused him; he looked up and then, after deliberately stretching himself, came leaping with long, graceful bounds over the rank grass and rocks which separated him from the road. He did not seem a bit angry, but evidently wished to get a nearer view of such an extraordinary object.

Forty yards, however, I thought was quite near enough for safety. The tiger was in the road behind me now; so I pulled myself together and began to quicken my pace.

Would he stop disgusted after the first hundred yards, and give up the chase, or would he stick to it? I quite hoped he would follow me, and already pictured in my mind the graphic description I would write home of my race with a tiger.

Little did I think what a terrible race it was going to be. I looked behind me. By Jove! he was "sticking to it." I could not judge the distance, but at any rate I was not farther from him than when we started. Now for a spurt. I rode the next half-hour as hard as I could, but on again looking round, found I had not gained a yard.

The tiger was on my track, moving with a long swinging trot, and going quite as quickly as I was.

For the first time I began to feel anxious, and thought uneasily of the ten long miles which separated me from safety.

However, it was no good thinking now; it was my muscle and iron steed against the brute. I could only do my best, and trust in Providence.

Now there was no doubt about the tiger's intention; his blood was up, and on he came, occasionally giving vent to a roar which made the ground tremble. Another mile had been traversed, and the brute was slowly but surely closing up.

I dashed my pouch to the ground, hoping it would

stop him for a few seconds; but he kept steadily on, and I felt it was then grim earnest.

I calculated we must be about seven miles from camp now, and before I could ride another four my pursuer, I knew, must reach me. Oh, the agony of those minutes, which seemed like long hours!

Another mile passed, then another. I could hear him behind me now, pad, pad, pad, quicker and quicker and quicker, louder and louder. I turned in my saddle for a moment, and saw there were not twenty yards separating us! How enormous the brute looked, and how terrible! His huge tongue hung out, and the only sound he made was a continual hoarse growl of rage, while his eyes seemed to literally flash fire.

It was like some awful nightmare, and with a shudder I bent down over the handles and flew on.

As I now sit quietly in my chair writing, I find it hard to analyze the crowd of memories that went crashing through my brain during that fearful ride. I saw long-forgotten events in which I had taken part rise up distinctly before me; and while every muscle was racked with my terrible exertion, my mind was clear, and my life seemed to pass before me like one long panorama.

On, on, on; the slightest slip I knew would be fatal; a sudden jolt, a screw giving, and I should be hurled to instant death.

Human strength could not stand much more; the prolonged strain had told upon me, and I felt it would soon be over. My breath came in thick sobs, a mist gathered before my eyes—I was stopping; my legs refused to move, and a thousand fiends seemed to be flitting about me, holding me back, back! A weight like lead was on my chest; I was choking. I was dying. Then a few moments, which seemed a life-time, and then—crash—with a roar like thunder the tiger was on me, and I was crushed to the ground. Then I heard shots fired, a Babel of men's voices, and all was blank.

After many days of unconsciousness and raging fever

reason gradually returned, and I heard the particulars of my deliverance.

A party of officers had started with a shikaree (or native hunter) to a trap which had been prepared for the tiger. A goat was tethered on the outskirts of the jungle, and the sportsmen had started to take up positions in the trees near to wait for their game, which the bleat of the goat in the stillness of the night would speedily have attracted.

They were talking of our coming bicycle race as they went along, and expecting every moment to meet me on my return journey. As they passed a clump of bushes I came in sight about a quarter of a mile in front of them, whirling along in a cloud of dust which hid my terrible pursuer. They soon, however, saw my awful danger. The huge brute, mad with rage, hurled itself upon me just as we reached them.

My friends stood almost petrified with terror, and did not dare to fire; but the shikaree, a man of iron nerve, and accustomed to face sudden danger of all kinds in the hunting field, sprang quickly to within a yard of the tiger, and putting his rifle almost to the animal's ear, fired twice and blew its brains out, just in time to save my life. I was drawn from under the palpitating body of my dead enemy, every one present believing it was all up with me.

Making a litter of boughs, they carried me into the camp, where I lay for many weeks lingering between life and death.

This little story, translated especially for ROMANCE from the German of Berthold Auerbach, illustrates pathetically the value of a good conscience. It illustrates also the enormous influence of bad counsel. It might almost be said that no man sins alone. Perhaps it is not too much to say that nine-tenths of the crimes which are committed are the result of evil associations.

THE SAVINGS BANK.

You know that I lost my father and mother in my infancy, and that I had not a relative in the world. I was wild and thoughtless when I began my apprenticeship as a locksmith. My master was, on the other hand, a grave, reserved man, so that a very few words from him were important. When for the first time he paid me a week's wages, he said: "Peter, you do not need more than half of what is due you; the other half I will set aside for the savings bank." And so it was.

On Palm Sunday, before mass, he went with me to the savings bank. My name was written in a huge register, and they gave me a book, on the first page of which was inscribed my name, and on the second my deposit, seven crowns. I held my little book lovingly, and looked often at my name and the amount of my capital. I was so enchanted with this first operation that I became avaricious. I reformed my habit of smoking, and gave myself no rest till I had another small sum to deposit. When I passed the bank building, I would say to myself, "There is my good money bringing interest night and day. Very good. I will add to the amount."

Would that I had continued to talk alone to myself! But I soon confided in a companion from the Palatinate, and whom for that reason we called the Palatin. To amuse myself on Sunday, I would take my book from its box, and would try to compute precisely how much a month my twelve crowns would bring me. The

Palatin, who was a skilful accountant, told me exactly, and then he began to make sport of the trifling amount, and tossed my book into the air, exclaiming: "Look at the fortune of the great capitalist, Peter Werner!"

The little book fell on my head, and seemed to me to have suffered insult. I wiped it, put it back into the box, and did not show it to my companion again.

Just before Christmas there was a great fire in the city. The building that contained the savings bank was consumed before aid could be brought. I was greatly excited when I learned that the registers of deposit were burned. The Palatin, however, laughed heartily. "You fool!" said he, "what are you crying for? The city has guaranteed the deposits made in the savings bank. You have your receipt. The state must pay you."

This reflection reassured me. I showed my book to my companion again, and he told me that it was perfectly correct.

That night, when we lay down side by side to sleep, he said: "Peter, you and I can be rich, and have nothing to do but see the world, and let our money work for us." He added that we must both go to California, where the earth is full of gold.

"Very good," I answered, "but who will give us the money to make the voyage?"

"Haven't you your bank-book?"

"You called it a trifle yourself."

"We will make something better of it," he said, striking a light. "I have an idea. Get up and show me your book."

"Capital!" he cried, when I had given him my book. "Nobody will have the slightest suspicion. 'Received this day five crowns.' Of 'five crowns' I will make 'five hundred,' and we will have the means of starting on our travels."

At these words I began to tremble. "My friend," said I, "this ought not to be done. I will not permit it."

"Let me alone," replied he; "I will show you how easy it is."

A fatal curiosity awoke in me, and I said to him: "You can do it this way. Try it on another paper, or else you will spoil my book, and I shall lose the little I possess."

I hoped he would not succeed, and that his failure would deliver me from my guilty covetousness; and yet I could have wished him to succeed.

"Let me alone," he sharply replied, "and do not make me angry; or else my hand will tremble, and I shall spoil everything."

I crossed my arms on my chest, and with trembling I watched him change the words written in my precious book, while it seemed as if my heart were bursting. Then he took a little knife and scratched out a few letters. I shivered, and yet I said to myself: "Now you are rich, and able to grow richer."

I looked at what he had just written. "Received five hundred crowns." Nobody could detect the least falsification in these words, and the great register was burned.

We returned to bed. I already saw myself across the ocean, picking up nuggets of gold. I had a carriage with four magnificent horses, and a servant who offered me a beautiful meerschaum pipe trimmed with silver, while another poured my champagne.

The next morning at the table I feared every moment that I might see an officer approaching to take me to prison. I was so much afraid of uttering an imprudent word that I dared not reply immediately to any question. I no longer dared to carry money to the savings bank, but made long détours to avoid passing the building in which it had been reorganized. Gradually, however, I recovered a sort of tranquillity, as I saw that nobody suspected what I had done. But when, on the approach of Christmas, my master's children began to dance around me one morning, saying, "We know something that we shan't tell!" their voices pierced my heart like a knife. They knew the surprises their father was preparing for our pleasure, and were delighted with their secret.

On Christmas Eve, Counsellor Menninger's servant came running to our workshop. I was in the doorway. She said she had come for me, and that I must go at once with my tools to her master's house.

The counsellor's name had terrified me. Could my offence be already known? I had decided not to use the book until spring, and had never shown it. But I was afrraid of everything.

Nevertheless, I went with the young girl. She had a sweet, fresh face, and the pure Christmas light burned in her eyes.

"My father was a locksmith," said she. "St. Peter is our patron, and for many people the key to Paradise is the key to their money-box."

We arrived at the counsellor's house, and I was shown into a richly-furnished room. The counsellor brought me an elegant case whose key was broken, and bade me open it. He then told Catherine, my guide, that he had other preparations to make, and bade her remain with the locksmith.

"It will be hard for you," said I to Catherine, "to leave these beautiful rooms for some poor little home."

"I have plenty of time in which to make up my mind to it," she replied. "But you do not yet know everything. Living in a rich dwelling, one soon learns that it matters little whether he is served with a golden spoon or a brass one. The essential thing is to live in peace with a good conscience."

At these words I could no longer find the keyhole, and Catherine began to laugh at my lack of skill. At length, however, I opened the casket, and my eyes were dazzled by its contents. Upon a blue velvet cushion glittered a set of diamonds.

Catherine stepped to the door and called her master; but no sooner had he glanced at the casket than he rudely seized my hand, saying: "The brooch with the large diamond in the centre is gone!"

I shook like a poplar leaf, and was about to throw myself on my knees, when I heard Catherine's voice.

"How can you think——" said she, "I was here!"

"Be still! We will examine you too!"

He called his wife, and then, turning to me, said that he would search me, while his wife did the same to Catherine.

And seeing this honest maiden outraged by such odious suspicion, I yielded myself to his hands. But I never can tell what I felt at that moment. I felt no longer like a man, or even a slave, but like some vile animal. An act of cruel injustice had been committed against me. Compared with this, the offence of which I was really guilty seemed but a petty and childish thing.

My anger grew still greater when another servant suggested that Catherine might have hidden the diamonds in her hair, and I saw the poor girl as pale as death with her braids all unbound.

Of course, the counsellor found nothing on Catherine or on me. I remember that in parting I said to the young girl: "Be patient; I will make up to you all you have suffered through me."

The affront I had suffered paralyzed my conscience.

I sought often to see Catherine, but seldom successfully. She said she was afraid that, if we were seen together, it would cause fresh suspicion. One day, however, she met me with a joyful expression, and said:

"God be thanked! We are now completely justified. My master's sister has written him that she forgot to put the brooch into the casket."

"And is not the counsellor going to beg my pardon?"

"He wished me to do so," she replied, "and asked me to do so for him." At the same time she begged me to harbor no resentment because of what had happened to me.

"You may have committed some secret fault," said she. "Accept what you have suffered as an affliction."

I never had felt so happy before. I told Catherine that I would yet be rich and would give her a beautiful carriage, harnessed to four horses, and she promised to be faithful to me, should I come for her on foot. The thing I had done still seemed nothing in comparison with the humiliation which I had suffered.

Palm Sunday having come, I decided, at the instance of the Palatin, to draw my money, in order to try my fortune in the world and make Catherine my wife. I wished the Palatin to accompany me to the bank, but he refused.

I entered the counting-room. Counsellor Menninger was there. At first I was frightened, and then the sight of him gave me new courage. He was the man who had insulted me. While I waited, the sweat trickled down my limbs, and my book stuck to my fingers as if it never could be shaken off.

At last my turn came. The counsellor put on his spectacles, and looked at my book. I could hear no sound, but the monotonous ticking of the clock. My heart knocked hard against my side.

"You have been very economical," said the counsellor. "Will you have coin or paper?"

I said I would have paper, and he gave me a little roll of notes on each of which was written: "100 crowns." I trembled so that I could hardly hold these notes in my hands, and when he asked me if the right sum was there, I could only nod in the affirmative. Suddenly he looked attentively at me. "Are you not the locksmith," he asked, "whom I summoned on Christmas Eve?"

"Yes," said I.

"I am delighted to see you again. I beg you to forgive my unjust suspicion of you, which must have caused you pain. It would give me great pleasure if I could render you a service. But what is the matter? Are you ill?"

I fell on my knees, crying, "No, no; I am a scoundrel. Take back your money."

And I told him all.

The counsellor was a good man. He saw my despair, and spoke to me kindly. My dangerous companion was obliged to leave the city. I was affianced to Catherine in the counsellor's house, and he aided me to establish myself in the city. I ought to add that before I left the savings bank I burned my little book.

ROMANCE.

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The following characteristically Spanish story by José Selgas, translated for ROMANCE by Elizabeth Foster, illustrates clearly the prevailing dramatic temper of the writers of Southern Europe. The succession of vivid scenes with which the narrative opens; the artful contrast of the villain with the hero; the gradual concentration of interest upon the awful intention of the rejected lover, while the method of his victim's escape is still as dark as night; and then the gathering upon the stage, as it were, of almost all the principal *dramatis personæ* at the end—all show distinctly a deeper regard for theatrical effect than is found in the same class of writing in the North; but it is far from unpleasing.

THE SALUDADOR.

OUR story treats of a *saludador*, or medicine-man, as the Indians might call him. His abode is to be found in the mountains, in the valleys, or in the forests, where his habitation consists of a log-cabin. He does not flourish the magic wand of a conjurer, but he carries a thick, knotted stick, torn from an oak-tree.

His garb does not reveal his marvellous power, for he dresses like any ordinary peasant. His phrases cannot evoke spirits, nor has his voice the sepulchral accent of an oracle's. His appearance is rude, his hands are rough, his smile kindly, and his glances indifferent. Do not seek for the traces of profound thought on his brow, for he lacks both the sharp intuition of a soothsayer, and the foreknowledge of a magician. He is simply a man raised under the open sky, bronzed by the sun, weather-beaten, and hardened both by labor and nature.

He can plough the earth and render it fruitful; can guide a drove of cattle along the mountain-side; can feel the approach of day, before it is dawn; the rain before it falls; and the tempest before it bursts forth. These are some of the gifts he possesses.

If you ask the simple country people in Spain, "What

is a *Saludador?*" they will shrug their shoulders at your ignorance, and answer: "A *Saludador* is a *Saludador*, to be sure, for he possesses the power of healing."

He really possesses an extraordinary gift of nature, for he can stop a mad dog in his wild flight, with the magnetic power of his eye, or can extract the poison from the veins of a man attacked by hydrophobia.

To proceed with our story:

The daughter of Tio Blas, the miller of Casa-honda, was the greatest beauty in that vicinity, as all were obliged to admit. She was as sweet and round as an apple, while her smiling face indicated that she was aware of her charms; and her proud bearing revealed that she considered herself superior to all the rest.

This was excusable, however, for she never alluded to the faults of others; was content to be the first, and did not care to find out who was the last.

She was an excellent house-keeper, and so neat that one might eat soup from her hand. She sang like a lark, and danced like a sylph.

A streamlet coursed along the mountain-side, and fell directly in the teeth of Casa-honda, one might say; so Tio Blas built a mill there, which was very useful to all the neighborhood.

As can be easily imagined, many of the young men laid siege to the miller's daughter, but she gave them all the mitten, and they would rush off crestfallen.

Tio Blas used to laugh heartily, and exclaim:

"Go for her, boys!"

But Tia Martina, his wife, would get "as mad as hops" with her husband, and would say:

"Blas, mind your business."

"Let me alone," grumbled Tio Blas. "If you don't hit a stone, it will not grind."

"That is flour from another barrel," replied his wife. "Wait till the snow melts, and the mill will work. Let the young men keep away, for we do not want to get rid of our daughter yet."

Among her suitors was one who was more determined to win her than all the rest. One afternoon he found her

alone under the grape-vine, and approaching her, he said:

"Lucia, may I taste some of those grapes?"

"No, Cristobal," she replied.

"Why not?"

"Because they hang too high for you."

Cristobal, crestfallen, commenced to dig away at the earth with his stick, and finally rested both hands on it, and, looking at the miller's daughter with a glum face, said, "Farewell, Lucia," and went off.

"Farewell, Cristobal," answered the miller's daughter.

He jumped the stream, and went off on the opposite bank, while Lucia followed him with her eyes, and saw him grow smaller and smaller, until finally he was lost to view. She raised her eyes later, and saw him suddenly re-appear on a distant peak like a gigantic form, which grew larger until it seemed merged into the sky, with its arms extended toward her, terrible and threatening, as though they wished to annihilate her. This fantastic vision lasted but a moment, because the landscape rapidly disappeared in the darkness of the night.

Lucia could not endure Cristobal, and his persistency in following her made her angry. She could not bear the sight of him, and she had already refused him many times. But though the other poor fellows took "no" for an answer when she refused them, and sought for consolation among the girls of the neighboring villages, according to the old saying:

> "Every Jack has his Jill;
> What one don't want, another will,"

Cristobal would *not* take "no" for an answer. He kept after her like the handle after the ax, and followed her like her shadow.

Whenever Lucia saw Cristobal, she felt uneasy, and as though she carried the whole weight of the world on her shoulders, because he frightened her with his looks, which were as venomous as a basilisk's. The smile froze on her lips when she saw him, and it seemed

as though her blood were turned to gall. His presence marred her gayety, as water puts out a fire, or nightfall overshadows day.

Was Cristobal a monster, or lame or deformed?

No, indeed. He was considered very good-looking, and the girl least disposed to get married would have gladly allowed him to lead her to the altar in those days.

Then why did Lucia shut the door in his face? Simply because he did not please her fancy; and no one can get an idea out of a woman's noddle when it is once rooted there. Everybody gossiped about the scornful way she treated him.

"Yes, she will not choose anybody now, but she will take up with a broken stick at last," one would say.

"No, she will dedicate herself to the church," said another.

"No, indeed, she is expecting one of the Wise Men from the East."

That is what the men said, while the women would discuss Cristobal thus:

"What a hard heart!"

"His head is as thick as a donkey's!"

"As though there were no other women in the world except Lucia!"

So they would canvass Lucia and her doings, surprised that she still remained single, for in that region every maiden of nineteen had already found her affinity.

There was a young man far away on the mountain heights, who was a great hunter; he could climb the mountain side faster than a goat; and could shoot a ball through the eye of a needle.

With his hat drawn over his brow, in his high boots, and leaning against his gun, his inseparable companion, he might cast sly glances at the most hard-hearted damsel, sure of winning her approval. However, he cared only for hunting, and rarely went down to Casahonda.

Occasionally he would bring wheat to the mill to have it ground, and afterward would return to the pine-

groves, just as he had come. His name was Salvador, and his father was the *Saludador*, who performed such marvellous deeds.

Salvador did not waste time in making pretty speeches, and it seemed as though he had not even noticed Lucia. She felt annoyed that he, who was straight as an arrow, and strong as an oak, did not speak to her, nor look at her. Whenever he came down, her tongue would run like a mill-clapper, and she would pass in and out by his side, giving him coquettish glances, until finally the hunter was smitten by her charms.

He then came down more frequently with his bag of wheat, and they began to understand each other, without anybody's being the wiser.

How could people suspect that the *Saludador's* son was the apple of Lucia's eye? Bah! Not even old Nick himself would have dreamed of that; but where it is least expected, Cupid flings his dart.

While the people were peacefully sleeping at the mill, when the darkness covered the earth like a pall, a shadow would roam around the mill and glide along the wall, without seeming to touch the earth; sometimes it would appear that the ground had opened to swallow it, or again that it was lost in the air.

A quick ear could have distinguished, amid the sound of falling water, whispering, as though the breeze were murmuring to the poplars.

One night Lucia opened the casement of her room, at the back of the mill. At first, she could not see, but as her sight grew stronger, she distinguished the white wall, and the whizzing mill-stone, and then a phantom, which drew nearer, until it reached her window, and with a faint voice exclaimed: "Lucia."

"What is it?" she replied.

"Did you expect me?" said the figure.

"Yes," replied Lucia—"but go away."

"So soon?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I am afraid."

"What for?"

"For your sake."

The shadow then left the window, and went off, melting into the air like smoke.

A few moments later, Lucia perceived another dark shape, which crept along the wall, and she had to press her hands to her lips to repress a scream; while her heart seemed about to burst from her bosom, and her limbs trembled violently.

It passed by her casement, and went off after the other shadow, creeping along like a snake, and as it disappeared, it shook its arms, like an eagle flapping its wings, and Lucia imagined that its eyes gleamed like two coals of fire.

All this occurred in the twinkling of an eye, while Lucia watched it without daring to move or breathe.

Suddenly she heard a distant cry, like the howling of a wolf, and a sharp report at the same time.

She clasped her hands, and fell on her knees, half-dead with fright.

Tio Blas was very hospitable, so he had a table placed under the grapevine-trellis, with a jug full of old rum, always ready for any stray guest. The countrymen used to congregate there like flies around molasses.

On holidays Tio Blas would hang up the jar, put a cloth on the table, and play cards with his old cronies. Then they would discuss the doings of the whole neighborhood.

Lucia passed a sleepless night, and when day broke, she still seemed to hear the wolf's growl ringing in her ears, and the sharp report. As soon as the laborers began to stop at the table to take a drink before going to their work, she went out, looking as yellow as wax. She glanced up and down the road, and finally ran off up the hill. The sun was high in the heavens when she returned home.

"Where do you come from?" asked Tio Blas.

"From up yonder," she replied.

"Well, just remember," said her father, "down here we are still fasting."

Lucia had evidently forgotten that her father was in the habit of taking his breakfast in the morning.

She did not reply, and went on with her work of preparing breakfast, but no one could eat it, though Tio Blas had good teeth, sharpened by hunger.

"You forgot the salt," grumbled Tia Martina.

"The salt!" exclaimed her husband. "It seems to me that she left out the fire. This is raw. Come, give me some wine."

As Lucia bent her head over the glass, she brushed it off on to the floor, where it broke with a crash, while she kept on pouring the wine on the table.

"Girl, what are you doing?" cried the miller. "You are possessed with the evil one. What has come over your spirit to-day?"

"Blas," said his wife, "keep quiet."

He obeyed by holding the jug to his lips, and raising his eyes to the sky while he drank.

Lucia felt the blood rush to her face, and she went to the door, wiping her eyes with her apron.

Just then she perceived Cristobal coming toward the mill. The sight made her breathe heavily, and press her teeth together so that she might not scream, while she closed her eyes in order not to look at him.

Cristobal drew near, and said: "Lucia, what queer things one sees when he is not asleep!"

"What does he see?" inquired Lucia, witnout opening her eyes.

"He sees some one come down from Casa-alta to Casa-honda by night."

"What of that?" she asked.

"Well, I struck the trail. The wolf smelt the prey from afar: and when the wolf howls, it is because he is hungry."

Lucia fixed her eyes on Cristobal, repeating, "Hungry?"

"Yes," said Cristobal, "so hungry that he could eat up anybody alive."

His face looked horrible—more like a fiend's than a human being's.

Lucia had never seen the Evil One, but she made the sign of the cross, like a good Roman Catholic, for she thought that he was before her. Scarcely able to speak, she murmured:

"What have you done?"

"I have found you out," retorted Cristobal. "I shall pay you in the same coin; love is paid with love; and you shall know me, also."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Lucia.

"I mean that I abhor you, and I want you to hate me."

Lucia kept crossing herself, as though to drive away the Evil One, while Cristobal gnashed his teeth, and cried, with flashing eyes:

"Come, I shall wait for you behind the mill."

So saying, he turned away, and went around the corner. Lucia imagined that some one was pushing her along, for she followed him, scarcely knowing what she did.

Cristobal had his jacket strung over his shoulder, and uncovering his arm, he said: "Look here."

His sleeve was stained with blood.

"You have killed him!" cried Lucia.

"No, not yet," replied Cristobal. "This is not his blood."

He lifted his shirt-sleeve, and showed his bare arm, bound around the elbow with a handkerchief. Then he added:

"This is my blood. When the wolf howled, he heard it, and shot at me, and hit my arm. I expected it. I might have thrust my knife up to the hilt into his breast, before he had time to reload his gun, but I did not care to do so, for I want *you* to kill him."

"I!" exclaimed Lucia.

"Yes, you shall kill him. My arm will deal the blow, but you will give his death sentence. If you dare to look at him, to talk to him, he shall die. Your eyes shall kill him, your tongue shall be the dagger which shall do the deed. Tell him that I am watching your words, and your glances. Just tell him so, and

he will come after me, and I will kill him, as the wolf kills his prey. If you are never to be mine, you shall never be his. The mad dog bites, and his bite is fatal."

Lucia covered her face with her hands. Salvador's life then was at her mercy. There is no defense possible against the dagger of the assassin, who lurks in the shade, and will give a thrust either in the breast or the back. Only one resource seemed left to her—a woman's tears; to weep bitterly without restraint until she should move Cristobal's stony heart. She could not shed tears, however, for her eyes were hot and dry, and her throat was strained, so that she could not speak. Only one hope was left—Providence and Divine Justice. She raised her eyes to the blue, serene sky, and, invoking the aid of the Virgin, cried: "Holy Mother!" and fell on her knees.

Cristobal had disappeared.

When Tio Blas got an idea into his noddle, it stuck there. To attempt to remove it was like breaking cold iron, and made no impression, no matter what might be said. His wife, however, would not put up with his freaks, and they would dispute warmly as to whether black was white, or white, black. But they did not fight like cats and dogs, though they did have their squabbles, when neither would yield. They would get over their disagreements, after a while, and be as mild as milk.

It would have been rather tame at Casa-honda, if they had not been so apt to disagree.

One day, when they were left alone in the mill, they commenced to spar with each other about their daughter.

"I tell you, Martina, the girl is moonstruck, and is in love," said Blas.

"It's no such thing, even if Blas does say so. The girl is as fresh as a rose, and has nothing on her mind."

"Woman, you'll deny your own existence soon. Lucia is as thin as a shadow. I have no cob-webs in my eyes, I tell you. She is as yellow as wax. There must be some ghost around here."

"Blas, you don't know what you are driving at, and you talk like a goose. Do you want your daughter to be like a magpie all the time? Yellow, indeed. Look at yourself, with your face as red as a beet. You can't see anything straight. Ah, if the wine-jug would only talk!"

"You fly off on a tangent, Martina. Leave the jug alone, and don't carry it on the tip of your tongue. Look here, Martina, in order that the mill-stone should go around the water must flow."

"What has the water to do with the wine?"

"Answer me, you bane of my life! What has Lucia to do with the wine-jug? I tell you there is a hidden hand around this place, as sure as my name is Blas."

"Bosh!"

"When you get stubborn, not even a drove of oxen could move you! 'Scissors' you'll say unto the last even if they cut you in pieces."

"A nice one you are to talk! Your own mother's son! So stubborn! When you get so, not even an earthquake would shake you."

"I shall crush you. See who comes there," he said, pointing to somebody in the distance; and adding: "Speak of the Evil One, and straightway he appears."

Tia Martina thrust out her head, and looked in the direction in which her husband was pointing.

"What nonsense!" she exclaimed. "I only see Salvador from Casa-alta."

"The very one who has turned her head."

"I don't believe it," said Martina, curling her lips.

"Very well, wait till he gets here, and you'll see your daughter come tumbling down the chimney in her haste to see him."

Martina put her arms akimbo, and said:

"See here, Blas, is he the ghost who roams round here?"

"Yes, Martina; don't cross yourself. Because he is as strong as an oak, the girl has taken a fancy to him, and you'll have to put up with him, as your mother did with me."

It was enough when Tio Blas liked anybody for Tia Martina to look askance at him; and she was about to pick flaws in Salvador as he entered the door. She bit her lips, but kept on muttering to herself.

Salvador was cordially received by Tio Blas, while Tia Martina looked as though she would like to annihilate him.

"Here, my lad," cried the miller. "Bring your bag of wheat, and we'll grind it for you. Take a drink, without ceremony, and make yourself at home."

His words struck Martina's ears like poisoned arrows, and she was so angry that she could hardly restrain herself.

Tio Blas kept going to the door, and Salvador also was on the alert; but Lucia did not make her appearance. At the end of an hour, Tio Blas could not disguise his impatience, so his wife said scornfully:

"Blas, don't look up to the roof, for nothing is coming down the chimney yet."

Tio Blas bit his lips; but instead of answering his wife, he went to the door and gave a shrill whistle.

Lucia immediately came in answer to her father's summons, while he and her mother looked at each other defiantly.

Lucia entered the mill without glancing at Salvador, who followed her with his eyes.

"Where were you, girl? asked her father.

"In the house," she answered.

Salvador, who was leaning against a bag of flour, said, though the sky was serene and beautiful:

"The sky is cloudy."

His words were directed to Lucia. Tio Blas understood the allusion, and winked at him, waiting to hear Lucia's answer but she would not open her lips.

Then the miller exclaimed:

"Oh, no, the sky is cloudless, as clear as a mirror."

"Yes," replied Salvador, "but the weather is very changeable, Tio Blas."

All their efforts were unavailing. Lucia kept her eyes fastened on the ground, and would not speak.

Salvador felt as though she had thrown a pitcher of cold water over him. Tio Blas fumed inwardly, while Tia Martina chuckled with glee.

Near the roof, behind the mill-stone, was a hole which served as a ventilator for the mill. A head, with a narrow brow, thick eyebrows, and bulgy eyes, was peering through that hole. Its half-opened mouth displayed white teeth, as sharp as a wolf's, while its dilating nostrils reminded one of a wolf when he smells his prey, and his dishevelled hair looked like crawling serpents to Lucia's heated imagination. She was the only one who saw it. It looked to her like the head of Cain, lighted up with a red glow, the color of blood. She was so frightened that she could not speak nor move.

Salvador returned to his mountain home, without eliciting a word or a look from Lucia. The sun was shining brightly, but the poor hunter's heart was heavy and sad.

As soon as Tia Martina was left alone with Tio Blas, she put her hand on his shoulder, and said:

"Blas, where is the ghost you spoke of, who is after our daughter?"

"There is one, I assure you, Martina," he replied. "My word is as good as gold, and it is true."

He reached for the wine-jug, took a drink and turned his back on his wife, feeling greatly annoyed.

Near the road-side was a hermitage, hidden by the unevenness of the ground. It had escaped the general destruction of Catholic institutions in 1834, doubtless on account of its poverty. All the goods it possessed were a humble sanctuary, a house, which leaned against the hermitage, in order not to tumble to the ground, and a little land, which served as a garden and orchard for the dwelling.

The rites of the hermitage were kept up by contributions. It did not contain rich plate, nor precious stones, nor works of art of any description. The bell, which hung suspended between two posts in front of the church, was so small that it was scarcely louder than the voice of a child.

At the time of our story a Franciscan friar officiated at the hermitage. He had succeeded in escaping from the massacre of 1834—a memorable date, for both the revolution and cholera broke out at the same time.

Father Ambrosio saved himself, and, flying from his pursuers, reached Casa-honda, and took refuge in the hermitage. He was a venerable man, and soon was revered by all around him.

Lucia left her house, one morning at daybreak, with her shawl over her head. She carried in her hand a rosary from Jerusalem, made of olive-stone from the Mount of Olives, where Our Savior in His agony passed the night in prayer, and His sweat was like drops of blood.

Lucia went along without raising her eyes from the ground, looking as pale as a corpse. She followed a path which wound along the mountain-side, and was concealed by the walnut-trees' thick shade.

As she ascended the winding way, like a shadow after its body, hiding itself in the bushes, came Cristobal behind her, but Lucia was so wrapped in her own thoughts that she did not see two cruel eyes glowering at her in the dim morning light.

When she arrived at the hermitage, she found the door open. There were two lighted copper vessels burning at the altar, which shone like gold. The only ornament over the altar consisted of an oil painting of the Virgin at the foot of the Cross, holding in her arms the divine body of her Son.

Lucia sat on a stool and made her confession, while Father Ambrosio stood before her, scratching his head and feeling perplexed.

Finally he said:

"The Evil One is very knowing, and mixes up things so badly, it takes a long time to set them straight. But the Lord will not allow him to have his way."

"What shall we do?" asked Lucia.

Father Ambrosio scratched his head again, and repeated her question:

"What shall we do? I don't know, but we must do

something. If we could only get that wicked notion out of his head. Yes, we must drag him out of Satan's clutches, first."

"How shall we do so?" inquired Lucia.

"That's the point. See here, I can sound him."

"Alas, Father Ambrosio!"

"Who knows, my child! With the Lord's help, other lost sheep have been reclaimed and brought back to the fold."

"Alas," cried Lucia, "Salvador's life is in our hands. If Cristobal finds out that I have an inkling of his purpose, who can stay his fury against me? And he will find it out. He must have followed me even here, for he follows me everywhere. I have not seen him, but I am sure he was behind me. I cannot raise my eyes without meeting his." Then, lowering her voice, she added: "I even fear that he is listening to us now."

Father Ambrosio looked through the window, then searched the vestry, and returned, saying:

"No, there is nobody there."

Then he went on in a low tone: "This is a ticklish affair, of course, for the wild beast is loose, and we must try to catch him, so that he shall do no harm. But we must be patient. 'Rome was not built in a day.' We will do the best we can, and the Lord will help us. Only He can show us the way."

"I will try to feel resigned," said Lucia, wiping her eyes.

"Well, my child," said Father Ambrosio, "you must continue to be blind, and dumb, and let Salvador think what he pleases, and torment himself with his surmises. What can you do? Have patience, for we want to save his life, and a human soul at the same time. We shall see. Providence will come to our aid. Faith will move mountains, my child. Hope will cheer us on our way, and Charity will make us love our enemies and have compassion on them. Don't you feel in your heart the joy of the sacrifice that the Lord requires you to offer?"

"Yes, Father Ambrosio," answered Lucia.

"Well, then, have courage, for the Lord will bless your words, and your thoughts, and He will listen to your prayers. Now, go home and await the result, to see what punishment He may mete to us for our sins, or what good things He may send as a reward for our constancy"

Lucia arose, and humbly kissed the priest's hand, fortified with his cheering words. Then she took the road which led to Casa-honda.

Father Ambrosio followed her with his eyes, saying to himself:

"She has a good heart, a pure soul. That is God's gift. I have only taught her to pray, to read, and to love."

As he said these words, he saw her disappear under the shade of the walnut-trees. While he held his hand to his eyes, to shade them from the sun, he suddenly exclaimed:

"Ah, there goes the villain! It is he! He has crept out of the bushes like a wild animal. Oh, my Lord, have compassion on that soul possessed by the Evil One! Tear away the scales from his eyes, and illumine his soul with a ray of thy divine mercy!"

As he pronounced these words, his venerable face was lighted up with an expression of holy zeal.

He went back to his cell, and sat down to meditate. Finally he exclaimed: "Let us wait. The designs of Providence are inscrutable, and its means are mysterious. It makes use of a child to overthrow a giant. Life springs from death. Let us wait."

He took his prayer-book, but just then was interrupted by a sonorous voice crying:

"Father Ambrosio, Father Ambrosio."

He sallied out in search of the person who was calling him, and found a man, about fifty years old, hard and strong as an oak, who, jumping off the mule on which he was mounted, approached, and, kissing the father's hand, said:

"Good-day, father, here I am, alive and hearty. Don't you know me? I am Juan from Casa-alta."

"Salvador's father?" asked Father Ambrosio.

"The very same," replied Juan. "I have brought you a basket of fruit, which wants to be eaten, it is so luscious."

So saying, he placed a basket in the father's hands, who took it, saying:

"May the Lord reward you!"

"It is the first of the season, father, and this year we shall have plenty of strawberries."

"So you are the *Saludador?*" asked the father.

"That's what they say, father. Nobody can withstand me, not even mad dogs. I am gifted!"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Father Ambrosio. "You are welcome. But did you come only to bring me this basket of fruit?"

"No, indeed, I came to kill two birds with one stone. That's the reason I brought my mule. We have a sick woman in our neighborhood, who is dying, and as you know almost everything, I said, I will go for Father Ambrosio, and if possible, he will cure her, or if not, he will pray for her soul. So I jumped on my mule, and here we are."

"Well, you did your duty, and we must lose no time in getting to the sick woman."

So saying, he took his prayer-book, put on his hat and cloak, mounted the mule, and they went off together.

"I believe that you came for something else," said Father Ambrosio.

"Yes, sir, and that is the worst of all," answered the *Saludador*. "My Salvador is as good as gold, and as brave as a lion; his fists are as strong as brass, and he can shoot through the eye of a needle. Well, sir, in less time than you could say *Jack Robinson* he is as dull as a log. Some one has cast the evil eye on him."

Father Ambrosio interrupted him, saying:

"What are you saying? One should not believe in those things!"

"Oh, father, the Devil is always the Devil himself; my son is like his own shadow, and so gloomy that it

makes me feel sorry to see him; and his sighs almost break my heart. He will not answer my questions, and he has put a seal on his lips. He is pining away. What does all this mean? It makes me miserable, and his mother is almost wild."

"That is not due to the evil-eye, but to evil eyes, as one might say. If you will only prove yourself trustworthy and can keep your own counsel, with the Lord's help, we may do something."

"If you should tell me to throw myself headlong over this precipice, father, I would do so in the twinkling of an eye if it would help my son."

Father Ambrosio kept silent, and they continued on their way, through the pine-groves.

. . . . . .

It was so quiet at the mill that you could not even hear a fly stirring; but outside it was lively and gay under the grape-vine trellis. Tio Blas was seated at the table, playing cards with his comrades, while all the neighbors were congregated there, watching their game. There was Tio Merino, who served in a cavalry regiment, and wore a silver cross on his jacket. There was Tio Bocaza, a man of few words, who could throw a bag of flour over his shoulder, or lift it up by his teeth. The jug of rum was passed from one to the other, and all took their fill, while their tongues ran faster than ever. At a little distance, the lads and lasses were dancing on the greensward, to the sound of the guitar. What a group of lovely maids. Ginesa, with her long, black braids, black as night; Veronica, with the air of a princess, and a voice as low and sweet as a nun's; Paca, who skimmed along the ground like a bird and was flexible as a reed; Marta, the lame girl, who sang so beautifully; and Tia Changa's three daughters, who chatted like magpies. These were the *crême de la crême* of the village.

Their striped skirts displayed all the colors of the rainbow, and they wore blue, purple, yellow, or pink neckerchiefs covered with huge flowers, as though Spring had scattered them all on their necks.

Why was the mill so deserted, and the people so gay? Simply because it was a holiday.

In Madrid a holiday is a bore for rich and idle people. What can they do but feel bored? for it belongs to the lower classes, who pass the week at work in the counting-houses, or in the workshops. Consequently the theatres, the parks, and even the streets must be given up to them on such occasions. Idleness, so busy during the week, yawns on holidays. However, when one has to work for his daily bread, a grateful day of rest brings joy and happiness.

The guitars were strummed with zest, while the lads and lasses joined in the merry dance, joyous as birds.

Where is Lucia? There she is, with her magnificent eyes looking into vacancy, her smiling lips, her perfect form, herself; all except her heart, and her thoughts, which were elsewhere.

While the dance was most animated, the guitar suddenly stopped. Two sharp reports sounded near by, followed by a confused clamor of voices. Several boys came running toward the mill crying:

"A mad dog, a mad dog!"

This caused a panic among them all: the women hid themselves behind the men, but before anything could be done an enormous dog appeared, with blood-shot eyes, foaming at the mouth, and displaying his sharp fangs. He was trembling violently, and his back was bristling. His wide-open mouth was as red as fire, but he did not even bark.

"A mad dog," they cried again, and every one prepared to defend himself as best he could from this terrible enemy.

"Give me a gun!" cried some of the men, but no one obeyed, for all were paralyzed with fear.

The dog stopped, and looked wildly around, as though seeking for the victim in whom to fasten his poisonous fangs. He soon picked out one, and flying at him impetuously, he buried his teeth in his flesh.

Wild cries rose from the crowd who had witnessed

this rapid scene, while the dog drew back, ready for another attack.

Some one cried: "Go for the *Saludador.*"

Just then Tio Juan from Casa-alta came running down the hill, and, without stopping, threw away his stick, and rushed up to the beast, unarmed but self-possessed. His presence seemed to calm the fears of all, as if the danger were past. Fear was succeeded by curiosity, while the women, now feeling secure, came forward to gaze at him.

The *Saludador* folded his arms, and stood before the dog at about two paces' distance from his inflamed eyes and bloody mouth. The beast was bristling up again, and preparing to spring upon him: but the *Saludador* did not move. He kept his eyes fixed on his adversary. The dog's tail hung down stiffly, and his breathing was quick and hot.

Then the *Saludador* advanced a step forward, bending his head over the dog's head.

It was the decisive moment. Either the man or the dog must succumb. They were now so near together that the *Saludador* could only kill the dog or die himself. The blow must be swift, sure and deadly, for the dog would bite so long as he had a breath of life left. He must be destroyed with one blow, like a ray of lightning. The dog showed his fangs, ready to fasten them in the man's flesh. Nevertheless the *Saludador* held no weapon in his hand with which to overcome his enemy.

It was an unequal struggle, with everything in the dog's favor, and had an Englishman been present, he would have bet a thousand pounds on the dog. However, those simple country people seemed to feel sure of the man's triumph, and gradually gathered around still closer.

The dog looked threatening, but he did not spring at him. Soon his body quivered, he tried to run, but could not stir, so he showed his fangs, and crouched down. The climax had arrived; the *Saludador* approached still nearer to the beast, and as though to

provoke his wrath, spat upon his nose. The dog trembled, his inflamed eyes became dim, he tried to sustain himself on his legs, but he fell down flat.

The conqueror drew himself up proudly, pulled his hat over his eyes, and giving half-a-turn, went toward the mill.

The dog was dead, but his back was still bristling, his fiery eyes still glowed, and his half-opened mouth still displayed his sharp fangs. He had died of rage, but he still moved his jaws.

The *Saludador's* task was not yet completed, for the dog had bitten some one, and the *Saludador* had to withdraw the poison from his veins, which was almost equivalent to stopping a ray of lightning. They had taken the wounded man into the mill.

When Tio Juan entered the room, he found that the dog's teeth had met in Cristobal's arm, and the four bites were marked by four clots of blood. They were each encircled by a purplish ring, which grew constantly more inflamed, and the skin shone as the arm kept swelling more and more.

No one knows what passed through the *Saludador's* mind when he caught sight of Cristobal, but he knit his brow and gnashed his teeth. Did he mean to say that his power could not stop the action of the poison in the wounded man's blood? He drew near to Cristobal, looked at him attentively and said:

"My lad, you will go mad before three hours have passed; the dog was mad, and your blood did not need much to be kindled like tinder. You must be bound."

"Is there no cure?" asked one of those who was present.

"Cure!" exclaimed the *Saludador*. "The Lord can do anything, and He will decide. Let some one go after Father Ambrosio immediately. And leave us alone."

So Cristobal and Tio Juan were left alone in the mill, while the latter said in a solemn tone:

"My lad, you are possessed with the evil one, and I cannot cure you, unless you expel him from your body.

Father Ambrosio is a saintly man; free your mind of your sins to him; make your peace with God, and then I will do what I can for you."

Cristobal looked at the *Saludador*, with his eyes starting from their sockets, and turned pale as death.

"Very well," continued Tio Juan, "mind what I say, and don't keep back anything, for if you do, however small it may be, I shall not have the power of curing you, and you'll go raving mad."

So saying, he examined the wound, adding:

"It is swelling rapidly, and the priest is not here yet."

"Here I am," said Father Ambrosio, entering the room. He had run all the way, and as he was too old for such violent exercise, he was nearly exhausted.

"So!" exclaimed the *Saludador;* "you must have flown through the air. Come now, Cristobal, unbosom yourself to the father, for he holds your life in his hand."

Father Ambrosio sat down on a flour-bag near Cristobal, while Tio Juan went out, closing the door behind him, and saying to those outside:

"Hush, he is confessing himself."

"He is dying," they exclaimed.

"He may die," he responded, "but if he goes mad, he'll burst like a bomb-shell. Tio Blas," he added addressing the miller, "where is Tia Martina?"

"Over there, prattling like a parrot," said Tio Blas.

"Very well. What a handsome girl she was! Do you remember when you were courting her, Tio Blas? What good times we used to have when we were young! But Lucia is not far behind her mother. If I were twenty years old, I would go after her myself. Tio Blas, that girl ought to get married."

Tio Blas knit his brow, and put his finger to his forehead, saying:

"I have that in my head now, and I am expecting a lover to fall from the sky."

"Do you expect him from above?" asked the *Saludador.*

"Yes, like the showers in May," replied Tio Blas.

What he was about to reply never came forth, for just then Father Ambrosio opened the door of the mill, and showed his face beaming with joy, and Tio Juan read in his eyes what he wanted to know. Just then Tia Martina came forward, and he said to her:

"You arrived just in time. Enter now, for the lover is coming down the chimney."

Tio Blas and Tia Martina followed the *Saludador* into the mill. He drew near to Cristobal, who was waiting for him, with his head bent down. As he raised his eyes, he saw that they were wet with tears.

"Cheer up!" he exclaimed. "You have saved your soul, and now we will save your body. Yes, in fact, we'll save a soul, and two lives."

So saying, he caught hold of Cristobal's arm, inquiring of him:

"Come, now, will you be one of the witnesses?"

Cristobal looked fixedly at the *Saludador* without opening his lips, while he continued: "I want you to know that I only happened to reach here in time because I was coming to ask Tio Blas to give his consent to a wedding. Otherwise, you would have gone mad."

"What wedding do you allude to?" said Tio Blas

"Lucia's," replied the *Saludador*.

Tia Martina made a movement of astonishment, while she exclaimed:

"Lucia! With whom, pray?"

"That lets the cat out of the bag. With Salvador, my son, to be sure. Don't you make up faces, Tia Martina, for the young people love each other dearly, and that is sufficient. Cristobal, it is your turn now."

Cristobal extended his left hand toward Father Ambrosio, who pressed it warmly and, making an effort, said:

"I say that it is God's will."

He drooped his eyes, and two tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Tio Blas, it is your turn, and that will end the matter," said Tio Juan.

The miller put his hand over his wife's mouth to stop her outburst, and in a loud voice cried:

"I am willing, and I'll not take back my word, if I should be hanged for it."

His last words were directed toward Tia Martina in order to keep her quiet. Then the *Saludador* applied his lips to Cristobal's arm, and sucked the blood from the wounds. Lastly he prepared some bread-crumbs, and laid them on the wounds, while he bandaged the arm, saying, "Now you may feel sure that you will get well." And the *Saludador* had indeed healed him.

Cristobal went off with Father Ambrosio, while the *Saludador* hastened home to tell the good news to his son, climbing up the mountain-side as nimbly as a goat.

The annals of the Society of Psychical Research are full of instances like that of Thankful Benson, which is related below by James Franklin Fitts. However, it is comforting to know that such apparitions do not always portend ill-fortune.

A NEW-YEAR VISION.

When the irrepressible American bored down a thousand feet into the heart of Pennsylvania and extracted fabulous quantities of oil, and when the ladies became content with steel strips for corsets instead of whalebone—then one of the greatest and most adventurous of the industries of New England received its death-blow.

Our story relates to the time when there was bustle and business in an ancient and historic seaport, where now may be seen rotting wharves and tumble-down warehouses; when a dozen sea-going vessels were in the harbor where one is now seen; when the staunch whaleships went out on their long voyages, and came back laden with the wealth that made the prosperity of the port; when sailors and sailors' families made up a large share of the population, and the old town really seemed to belong less to the land than to the sea.

All this has changed, and the incidents we relate could hardly occur there now. But human lives and human hopes and fears, happiness and misery, are much the same everywhere.

Well back from the harbor, the wharves, and the busy part of the town, in that outskirt of it which was built on the rising ground that overlooked the town, bay, and ocean, Captain Benson had his cottage. He was at home very little of the time; but when he was there, he loved a place like this, commanding a wide view of the ocean-rim, where he could sit at the window by the hour and with his good glass discover the first indication of sails approaching the coast. He was a veteran

whaler, and had for fully fifty years pursued the business on all seas. For the last two years he had commanded the whale-ship *Chevalier;* on his last voyage out he had said to his wife: "It'll be the last, Nancy. Let me go once more to the South Pacific and fill the old ship with oil, and then I'll stay here and pass the rest of my days with you and Thankful. Jack Sturdy, my mate, will then be master—he's a fine fellow, Thankful. I must bring him here to see you."

Then the old captain looked from his wife to his daughter, and added the droll remark, "For my part, I'm beginning to think it's time I was better acquainted with you two."

He went to sea again; but he never returned. A year later the eyes of the wife and daughter were gladdened by the sight of the *Chevalier* sailing into the bay. But instead of him they eagerly watched for, the mate came up, slowly and sorrowfully, to tell them that the captain had died of fever in Callao, and was buried there.

John Sturdy was now captain, and was busy enough picking his crew, overhauling the ship, and making all ready for his first voyage in command of her. But it was noticed that after everything had been done for the wife and daughter which the dying captain had requested, after their grief had somewhat subsided, Captain Sturdy still climbed the hill to the cottage, at least three times a week.

Presently the gossips of the neighborhood began to hint that Thankful Benson could tell why he came so often; and not more than three months had passed since he first came, when Mrs. Benson silenced them all with the plain statement:

"There needn't be any mystery about it, Thankful and Captain Sturdy are engaged, and will be married as soon as a proper respect for the memory of her father will allow. It'll probably be at the end of the *Chevalier's* next voyage."

John Sturdy was an experienced seaman of thirty-five—fifteen years older than Thankful—to whom his

ship had been his world, and to whom ideas of love and marriage had appeared idle myths. He met Thankful Benson for the first time when she fainted in his arms upon his distressing errand to the cottage. She had grown upon his fancy with every visit, and his heart was quickly offered. With her it was a case of first love; he was all that her youthful imagination required. And when he took the girl by the hand, and asked the widow for her consent, she smiled and sighed all at once.

"Oh, it's well enough, Thankful," she said, "if you must marry a sailor; but I was in hopes you wouldn't let your affections go seafaring."

"It's the way of our family, you know, mother," and the daughter smiled and looked up to her sailor trustfully.

"Indeed it is; and a sorry and heart-breaking way it has been for the women, not only in our family, but in all the seamen's families. For thirty years I've known this port, and of all its sailors that have died in that time not one out of four has died in his bed. But the Lord wills it, and may you be happy."

"When I knew I was to be master of the *Chevalier*," said John Sturdy, "I did not think I should quit her for ten years, at least. I'm a sailor, and love the sea, with all its perils, but now, if Thankful asks me to quit it for her, I'm ready."

"Indeed, then, I do ask you."

"But only at the end of this voyage. My word has been given to the owners, and I cannot break it. The time will be short; let us live in hope of it."

"Ah, this one last voyage!" sighed Mrs. Benson ruefully. "Pray God it may fare better than that of my poor, dear Simeon."

The *Chevalier* sailed in March. The parting was a hard one; quite as hard for the man as for the maid. It need not be told why it was hard for her to give her young love's dream to the cruel chances of the sea; of him it must be said that, as love came late, it came strong as well.

"Don't go, Jack," she pleaded amid her sobs. "I know it's selfish, but I can't help it. Don't leave me! I shall never see you again if you do."

Her distress, her unbounded love, appealed to him powerfully. His resolution was severely shaken. Nothing but the sailor's ingrained honor and habitual self-discipline held him back, as he said:

"For heaven's sake, Thankful, don't tempt me away from duty! I leave you only because I must; but the time will be short. All our arrangements are for a short voyage; expect me back by the next New Year. I shall hasten everything for your sake."

She went to a sleepless bed that night. In the morning her father's glass showed her the *Chevalier* far out at sea. For many days she went about heavy-hearted. Her mother watched and pitied her, and her own heart bled afresh.

But youth is the season of hope, and love is its twin; and as the months of that spring and summer went by, the girl felt more and more as though she were only enduring a brief probation to life-long happiness. News had reached her of the *Chevalier* and her beloved. First came a letter from Rio, full of love and promise: then an incoming whaler reported speaking the *Chevalier* in the far South Atlantic, and that all on board were well; and then a letter from Lima. All was well, time was flying, the promised time for the reunion was approaching. There is rarely, yet sometimes, a New England autumn when the mellow Indian Summer is prolonged from November far into December, and the year fades away in days of veiled sunshine, when nature seems in a dream and winter is held back by some strange spell. It was so this year. Down to the first day of January there was neither snow nor frost; a silvery mist sat upon the sea; the days were like May-days, but with a softened sun; the nights were balmy and glorious. As Thankful and her mother sat outside the cottage, they could see the lights from the town and the bay. The sounds of laughter and talking came up to them; everything seemed under a charm.

So it was on that New Year's Eve. They sat there late, talking of the dead—of the absent—hardly daring to talk of the future. The night was bright and starlight; everything was visible, yet indistinct. At that place and time, nobody had been abroad for an hour, all were at home keeping New Year's Eve. Just then Thankful directed her mother's attention to a figure advancing slowly up the slope toward the cottage.

"Where?" asked Mrs. Benson. "I don't see it."

"Why, there!" said Thankful, with outstretched finger. "It's a man. He's coming this way. He—he looks like Jack."

She started up and advanced to meet him. Mrs. Benson strained her eyes, but could see nothing like a human figure. She saw Thankful advance a few paces, stretch out her arms, as if to embrace some one, and then fall senseless to the ground.

When Mrs. Benson carried her in and revived her, she started up and cried for Jack.

"My dear child, be calm!" said the mother. "He is not here. He has not been here."

"Yes, yes!—he was! I saw him—I almost touched him. He came close up to me—and then he disappeared, and I could not see him."

The mother looked at her with grief and awe.

"Dear Thankful," she said with deep solemnity, "be strong—cast your burden on the Lord—and bear your grief as I have borne mine. You have not seen John Sturdy; you have seen his double. You will never see him again."

For the next year their lives went on with that sense of chastened sorrow that possesses those whose only hope in this world is reft away. Mother and daughter drew closer together in their companionship of bereavement. Life for them was all in the past; their present comfort was merely that of ministering to the sick and afflicted about them, and thus to "learn the luxury of doing good."

The only news that had been received from the *Chev-*

alier was darkly confirmatory of the vision that Thankful had seen. One of the boats had been found floating in the South Pacific, empty and oarless; a ship wrapped in fire from stem to stern had been sighted afar off in those waters, where help could not be extended, nor inquiry made.

They lived on during that year, and sorrow grew old and was still as dark as ever. Their neighbors condoled with them, and hoped that the time would come when grief would be calmed, and that life might yet have some pleasures for these afflicted ones. Would that time ever come to Thankful? Not, surely, at such an hour as *this*, when the New Year was again at hand. It could bring no hope nor promise to her; but the time, as long as she should live, must be in her mind associated with his last words to her, "Expect me back by the next New Year. I shall hasten everything for your sake."

It was a very different New Year's Eve from the last. The harbor was locked in ice; snow covered the ground; the air was stinging with frost. A clear sound of bells from the town, as the new year was gleefully rung in, came up to the lone women as they sat by their fire. No speech had passed between them for an hour. As the last peal of the bells died away, Mrs. Benson said:

"It is all hard to bear, Thankful. We must learn to bear."

The girl started up with clasped hands and passionately exclaimed,

"But never to see him again—though I may live for fifty years! I can't endure the thought. He came to me once after death—why not again?"

The door noiselessly unclosed and admitted a moving figure. It advanced toward them; they looked at the face, spell-bound. It was pale, wan, wasted, but it bore a likeness to John Sturdy.

No womanly fright, no terror of the supernatural, possessed Thankful in that moment. Glad to have seen his face again in answer to her appeal, her loving, yearning heart hungered for something more than his

shadow. She started toward him—she opened wide her arms to him.

"O John," she said, "don't do as you did before. You said you would come back at this time."

Her loving arms enfolded him. Thank God, it was not a shadow—it was John Sturdy, weak, sick, feeble—but it was he.

They had the happiest kind of a New Year, after all. When the first greetings were over, and Mrs. Benson had refreshed him with tea, and he and Thankful sat side by side, hand in hand, inexpressibly glad but silent for want of words—then after a little he told the story of his adventures and escapes, by sea and land, out of all of which he had been saved to them. Some day he will tell it in print. It is too long to tell here.

When he had finished, Mrs. Benson asked, "Where were you a year ago to-night, John? Thankful thought she saw you."

He looked inquiringly at his betrothed. She told him all.

"That was the night," he said, "when the officers and crew of the poor burning *Chevalier* took to the boats in a heavy sea. One boat was swamped before my eyes, and all in it were drowned. Ours rolled and pitched so heavily in the chopping waves that I expected we, too, must perish. It was just there, while I was hopelessly directing the men at the oars, that a vision came before my eyes of the harbor here—of the town, and this cottage. I saw you both, and Thankful held out her arms to me. From that instant I knew we should be reunited. Yes, I *knew it*, and I cherished the belief and hugged it to my heart in all the dangers and labors that have beset me since."

Those true patriots, who die with their cause, rather than live under a foreign rule, illustrate the highest type of man known to history. They are not found in one age more than in another, nor in one walk of life more than another, and the records of all nations contain their names. Here is one of them, whose tragic tale, related by Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, has been translated from the Spanish by Rollo Ogden for ROMANCE.

THE CHARCOAL-BURNER MAYOR. 353

I.

IT was the fifteenth day of April, in the year 1810. General Godinot was the governor whom Napoleon had set over the District of Guadix, and his iron hand maintained there the most profound quiet. But it happened that his army became hungry, and the slaughter-houses of Guadix had to close their doors for the lack of cattle to kill. Never were human beings, thought the frugal Spaniards, so given as these conquerors to the eating of flesh at all hours!

In this distressing situation, the French General had called to mind that the District of Guadix was made up of several villages and a considerable number of the latter were still to be conquered.

"It is necessary," he said to the troops, "that the Eagle of the Empire should be carried everywhere. Do you disperse yourselves through all the villages and nooks and corners of the territory under my command; carry them the good news of the accession of Don José I. to the throne of San Fernando; take possession of them in his name, and bring back all the cattle you find in their yards and sheep-folds. Hurrah for the Emperor!"

In pursuance of this order of the day, ten or twelve columns sallied forth, each one composed of from one to two hundred men, going in the direction of the Marquisate of Zenet, to Gor, to Los Montes, and to the vil-

lages situated on the northern slope of the Sierra Nevada.

Among these villages, which, indifferent to the march of civilization, vegetate at the foot of the colossal and snow-crowned Mulhacem, the very ancient hamlet of Lapeza was and is famous for twenty leagues around for the indomitable character of its inhabitants, for its Moorish appearance, for the almost savage state of its manners and customs, and for other peculiarities which will appear in the course of our story. Celebrated in the wars with the Moors, its ruined fortress still recalls the name of its vigorous commander, Bernardino del Villalta, a worthy opponent of the followers of Aben-Humeya.

It was, as has been said, the 15th of April, of the year 1810. The hamlet of Lapeza presented a spectacle as laughable as it was admirable, as grotesque as impressive, as ridiculous as awe-inspiring. All its entrances were blocked by a wall made of trunks of oak-trees, which the entire population was bringing down from the neighboring mountain, and of which they were making heaps not easy to pass over. As the greater part of the townspeople consisted of charcoal-burners and the rest were wood-cutters and shepherds, they were executing the work with a skill and rapidity truly astonishing.

That thick wall of wood formed a sort of tower on the side where the Guadix road entered, and upon it the Lapezans had placed a certain formidable cannon, made by their own hands. It has left an imperishable memory; consisting, as it did, of an immense oak-trunk, hollowed out by fire, bound about by stout ropes and twisted wires, and loaded to the muzzle with I do not know how many pounds of powder and an endless number of bullets, stones, bits of old iron, and other projectiles.

There were to be counted upon, besides, all the arms of the village and mountains, the available weapons being about a dozen rifles, upward of twenty bell-mouths and blunderbusses, a knife, dagger, or clasp-

knife for each man, three or four dozens of hatchets, a few flint-lock pistols, an immense heap of stones of good size and all the slings necessary to send them flying, and a perfect forest of cudgels and sticks of various styles.

As respects the garrison, all the contemporaries of the affair are agreed that it consisted of about two hundred men, although they could be so called only by an excess of philanthropy, since they seemed more like orang-outangs than men. In their front line figured one who deserves especial mention, as a description of him will give an accurate idea of the others. He was the General of that army, the commander of that stronghold, the Mayor of Lapeza, and his name was Manuel Atienza.

He was the chief official of the village, a man of between forty-five and fifty years of age, tall as a cypress, bony or knotty (for that is the proper word) as an ash-tree, and strong as an oak, although, in truth, his long pursuit of the calling of charcoal-burner had burned and blackened him in such a way that he seemed like an oak turned into coal. His finger-nails were black as flint; his teeth like mahogany; his hands were bronze, burnished by the sun; his hair, erect and bristly, like undressed hemp, was in quality and color the same as the crest of a wild boar; his breast, which his opened shirt left visible from shoulder to shoulder and from neck to waist, seemed covered with horse-hair that had been roughened and coarsened by being over hot coals, and, in fact, the shaggy curtain that covered his prominent sternum had been singed, as had his heavy eyebrows. This was because the Señor Mayor was a charcoal-burner, or "farmer of the Sierra," as they call themselves, and had passed all his life in the midst of flame, like the souls in Purgatory.

In regard to the eyes of Manuel Atienza, it could not be denied that he saw with them, but no one could ever have been sure that he looked with them. His Honor's reputed ignorance, joined to a certain craftiness and the caution of a man well along in years, disposed him

never to fix his gaze upon those with whom he was talking, in order that they might not discover the defects of his understanding or knowledge; and if he did look at them, it was in so vague and suspicious and "tightly-buttoned" a manner, that it seemed as if those pupils were looking inward, and that that man had two eyes behind his ears like lizards. His mouth, finally, was that of an aged mastiff; his forehead was hidden behind his overhanging hair; his face gleamed like polished leather; and his voice, hoarse as the report of a blunderbuss, had certain rough and abrupt tones that sounded like the blow of a hatchet on wood.

Of his dress little need be said, as it was of the style common among the well-to-do of those villages; that is to say, it consisted of bull's-hide sandals, fastened with home-made cords; woolen stockings; short breeches of very dark, coarse cloth; a jacket of the same; a blue satin vest, flowered in yellow; a cartridge-box in place of a belt; and an enormous hat, under the felt-ribbed brim of which conveniently reposed all his authority. And, apropos of authority, I will add in conclusion that the Mayor's staff of office came up to his shoulder, and that its two black tassels, as big as oranges, proclaimed at a rifle-shot's distance a genuine "man of order," as we would say now.

Such was the Mayor of Lapeza, and of the same style were all his subordinates. If you think my description exaggerated, bear in mind that the race of the Lapezans has not degenerated or changed in the lapse of years. Go to the place yourselves, and you will be astonished, as I was, to find that in Spain, in the middle of the nineteenth century, all the wonders of an African civilization still exist.

II.

But the works of fortification are completed, and the arms judiciously distributed. Atienza has sent Jacinto home to get a very old drum, used in processions, at bull-fights, and in proclaiming edicts.

Jacinto—who, by the way, was the constable, and died as constable in 1859—draws near, beating to arms.

"Form ranks!" cries the clerk of the village; a person highly skilled in the military art, since he has served the King, Don Carlos IV., in the capacity of huntsman.

The two hundred Lapezans take arms, and form in line of battle in front of the Town Hall. Thereupon Atienza grasps a long, black sword, of ancient pattern, with a broad cut-guard and prolonged thrust-guards; hangs at his belt a flint-lock pistol; seizes with his left hand the Mayor's staff, just as a Marshal of France would have wielded his *baton*, and followed by a brilliant body of staff-officers, composed of the constable, the town-crier, and the *Undersigned*, which is the name applied by his proud and complacent wife to the notary public, passes his formidable hosts in review, while they present arms or throw their caps and hats into the air.

"Hurrah for the Señor Mayor!" shout or howl those heroes that are to be.

To which Atienza replies:

"The Mayor does not amount to a horn! Hurrah for God! Hurrah for Lapeza! Hurrah for Spanish independence!"

After this interchange of war-cries, His Honor directs Jacinto to beat a long roll; summons the town-crier to his side, and by the latter's mouth, which repeats one by one, and almost half by half, the words of the chief, pronounces the following harangue, clearly not written out beforehand:

"From news brought by Uncle Pioruo, it appears that the country's enemy is coming to Lapeza to-day, to conquer us and rob us of our property; and we, with the blessing of the priest, and the aid of our Holy Patron Saint, the Virgin of the Rosary, are going to defend ourselves, like good Spaniards, and show the city of Guadix that, if she has surrendered to the Frenchman, the people of Lapeza know how to die, as the people of Madrid died, the 2d of May; or to con-

quer, as the people of Bailén did, two years ago. To that end, the Mayor informs their neighbors that whoever does not perish to-day defending his own house shall be declared an unworthy Spaniard and a traitor to his country, and shall die, as is fitting, hung to an oak on the mountain. And that this may be made sure, as His Honor cannot write, he signs this with his cross, according to his custom, and the notary certifies it. Hurrah for God! Hurrah for the Virgin! Hurrah for Spain! Hurrah for Fernando VII.! Death to guzzling Pepe! Death to the French! Death to Godinot! Death to traitors!"

This mixture of a military proclamation and judicial declaration produced an extraordinary effect upon the Lapezans.

Manuel Atienza made a cross with his fingers, and kissed it, when it came time to sign; the notary certified the signature; the crier complimented the Mayor on his fine improvised oration; Jacinto beat another long roll on the drum, and hurrahs, dancing, and patriotic hymns closed the comic prologue of what was to be a veritable tragedy.

"Every one to his post!" exclaimed the clerk, when all was done.

Some mounted the wooden fortress; others, provided with a long fuse, manned the cannon; the shepherds who were most skilful in the use of the sling climbed up into the Moorish tower; the riflemen went out to an unprotected position in the Guadix road; and the Mayor placed himself at a point which commanded the whole field of battle, with Jacinto at his side in order to give the signal for firing by a roll on his drum.

Meanwhile the priest was blessing his parishioners, and again granting them absolution, and was devoting himself, together with the veterinary, the sacristan, and the grave-digger, to the preparation of bandages, the holy oil, and some stretchers to bear away the wounded and dead.

Almost all the women were praying in the church; as for the children, it had been ordered that morning

that they should all be sent to the top of the Sierra Nevada, so that their lives should not be endangered, and so that they might be ready, with the passing of years, to withstand another foreign invasion.

III.

It must have been about three in the afternoon when a cloud of dust proclaimed to the Lapezans the approach of the enemy. A little later some scattered shots from the skirmishers confirmed the first indication. The Lapezans leaped up and down enthusiastically, and just then, as the Mayor's last order, there were unfurled on the ancient Moorish fortress, and on the oak barricade, two or three black flags.

The church-bells sounded the alarm; several old women began to scream, and the young men to whistle; some stones whizzed through the air, and the rifle-shots in the road were more frequent and nearer.

A moment later the musketeers fell back toward the village, reloading their guns, and the first helmets, breast-plates, and bayonets of the invading army gleamed within range of the blunderbusses.

"How many are there?" asked Manuel Atienza of the one who had gone furthest forward.

"There must be two hundred," replied the man.

"Our forces are equal!" exclaimed the charcoal-burner with contemptuous pride. It did not occur to him that two hundred poorly-armed peasants do not mean the same thing as two hundred veterans, skilled in warfare and finely equipped.

"But they have some cavalry," suggested a second rifleman.

"I say our forces are equal," said Manuel Atienza again. "Let's see, Jacinto. Sound that drum. Spain, and at them! Hurrah for the Virgin!"

Jacinto gave the signal so anxiously waited for, and a cloud of stones and bullets falling upon the Frenchmen forced them to halt. A moment later they answered with a close volley, which laid low five Lapezans.

"Stop firing!" thereupon cried the Mayor. "They

are still too far away, and we have only a little powder. Let them come nearer. Remember that the cannon is kept back for the end, and that the fuse is not to be lighted till I wave my hat. You, ladies, see if you can't keep quiet and take care of the wounded!"

"There! they are coming on again."

"Never mind! Everybody quiet!"

"Now they are taking aim!"

"Everybody lie down!"

A second volley crashed against the oak trunks, and the Frenchmen advanced to within twenty paces of the besieged force. The foot-soldiers drew off to the two sides of the road, letting the cavalry come on.

"Fire!" then exclaimed the Mayor, in a voice like a cannon-shot, waving his hat in the air, and rushing into the midst of the greatest danger.

Then followed something horrible, indescribable. Frenchmen and Spaniards fired at the same time, covering the ground with the fallen. The cavalry rode up to the foot of the barricade, doubtless imagining that they could clear it with their fiery horses. Hundreds of stones swept down upon horses and riders. The latter, on their part, began to use their sabres with terrible effect. At the height of the tumult, in the midst of that slaughter, that whirlwind, that confusion, came at last the tremendous explosion of the cannon, making a fearful crash, and carrying death to besieged and besiegers alike.

The cannon had burst. The oak barrel, dashed to pieces, vomited grape-shot in all directions, front and rear and at the sides as well, mixed with a thousand fragments of wood which hissed as they flew through the air. The explosion of so much powder hurled the oak trunks about, crushing Frenchmen and Spaniards impartially. The whole was a chaos of smoke, dust, groans, wails, shouts, flames, and blood; of shapeless corpses, and limbs torn away, falling to the ground in the midst of balls, stones, and other missiles; of riderless horses that ran whinnying; of blind blows dealt to friend and foe alike by the Lapezans who were still

on foot; and of dagger-thrusts, pistol-shots, and blows with stones, that came from below, above, and everywhere, as if the end of the world had come.

And in the midst of this tempest, of this raging of evil spirits, there were heard at the same time the French cornet sounding the retreat, and the long roll of the Lapezan drum, while the voice of the formidable charcoal-burner, the indomitable Mayor, the irrepressible Atienza, made itself heard above the general din, shouting in tremendous tones:

"Give it to them, boys! Don't leave one of them alive! There can't be many left now!"

That was true; but so it was also that there were even fewer Spaniards. The oak cannon had caused more havoc among the Lapezans than among the French.

Nevertheless, as the latter did not know what means of defence those demons might still have in reserve; as they also were ignorant of the enemy's numbers; and as they had already been given cause to be excessively afraid of their opponents, they only thought of saving themselves in the quickest way possible. Disordered and scattered, the cavalry crushing down the infantry, the soldiers disregarding the orders of their officers, they began a retreat very much like a flight, pursued by the shepherds, who still had three leagues before them covered with projectiles for their slings, and by some riflemen who had cartridges left.

Thus the conquerors of Egypt, Italy, and Germany, stoned, shot at, blackened by powder, covered with blood and sweat and dust, and having left a hundred men at Lapeza and along the road, entered Guadix, that day, conquered by less than their number of shepherds and charcoal-burners.

IV.

The bloody drama which we have just witnessed could only have a terrible epilogue. My readers can imagine the surprise and wrath of General Godinot when he learned what had taken place at Lapeza.

"I will not leave there one stone upon another!" exclaimed the vengeful Gaul.

Four days later, twenty-four hundred men of all arms set out for the village ruled by Atienza, under the command of a general officer, and with as many supplies and munitions of war as if they were going to besiege a stronghold.

That large force came in sight of Lapeza at nine o'clock in the morning. They met no one on the road; not a shot, not a stone, received them. Everything was silence and solitude in the blood-stained village. The ruined wall of tree-trunks had not been rebuilt, and the church-bells gave no alarm at the approach of an enemy.

Thus the exasperated invaders entered the town, and there a sort of prophecy of what happened to them afterward in Russia must have come to their minds. Lapeza was depopulated, no less than was Moscow when Napoleon the Great entered it.

The wolves, satiated with feeding on the dead, had gone to hide again in the mountains. Only some poor women, who had come down that day to look at their abandoned homes, and to find food for the exiles, were discovered in the corners of the church, where, they thought, their enlightened conquerors would respect them. But, alas! it was not so. For lack of strong men to subdue, treacherous fortune offered them these wretched women to insult and to mock at.

Let us turn away our eyes from those infamies, many times enacted by the conquerors of Europe during their hated rule in Spain.

Proud and satisfied, those heroes were returning to Guadix, carrying as the only prisoners secured on that ostentatious expedition a helpless old man, decrepit and sick, whom they found in a hut, and a frightened boy who was taking care of him. But news of what was occurring had been carried up the Sierra by some one of the unfortunate women, and the infuriated fathers, brothers, and lovers rushed down to the road, descending from the heights like overflowing torrents.

Then began a fearful conflict from bush to bush, between the hundred men who still were under Atienza's orders, and the numerous army of the French. As soon as the challenge was given and the fight under way, the Lapezans began to wage a retreating battle, after the Moorish custom, so as to entice their enemies into the wilderness of the mountains. The latter were rash enough to fall into the trap, and though it is true that they almost exterminated that handful of peasants with their death-dealing arms, it is none the less so that the life of each one cost the loss of ten from the ranks of the pursuers.

The craggy rocks, the green chasms, the thickets, and the depths were sown with French corpses. It was one of those little-understood losses which the Napoleonic armies suffered in Spain; losses which are not given in the bulletins of great battles, but which at the end of the War of Independence yielded the enormous total of a half-million imperial soldiers, dead or missing in our peninsula.

But we must conclude.

Atienza, the unconquered charcoal-burner, who twice in four days has offered battle to Bonaparte's troops, is on the top of a lofty crag, surrounded by Frenchmen, shut in, lost, loading his old blunderbuss with his last charge, his head bandaged where he was wounded in the previous fight, a fresh wound in his breast, entirely covered with blood, carrying his staff of office in his belt as a mule-driver would his whip, and replying to the demands that he surrender with savage laughter, the echoes of which are repeated throughout the rugged mountain-slope.

A hundred balls are all the while whistling about him. He escapes them, leaping from one side to the other, now erect, now crouching, agile, rapid, elastic. Like a tiger ceaselessly coming and going, he draws back, leaps forward, runs in all directions, and terrifies as much in his defence as in his attack.

Finally, he fires his last shot from his blunderbuss, tracing a semicircle about himself with the deadly

weapon, as if he wished to sprinkle the mountain with balls. Just then another bullet strikes him in the abdomen, drawing from him a fearful roar. He knows that he is going to die. He throws away his blunderbuss, casting an angry glance at the now harmless gun. He draws from his belt the great staff which we know, and addressing a colonel who is urging him, in bad Spanish, to surrender, he says:

"I will not surrender! I am the village of Lapeza, which dies before it will yield."

Thereupon he breaks his staff, throws the pieces into the faces of the Frenchmen, and hurls himself backward, falling upon the rocks of a deep chasm, where he is dashed to fragments.

The enemy did not succeed in getting possession of so much as his corpse!

Though this story is by Georges Price (the *nom de guerre* of Ferdinand Petiperre, the French journalist and novelist), it is so intensely Spanish, and presents so grand and thrilling a view of the Spanish character, that it should have been from a Spanish pen. It has been especially translated for ROMANCE.

AN INSPIRED PARROT

THE Marquis of Saldana was at Grenada at the time of the downfall of Queen Isabella II., in September, 1868. The last royal army, commanded by the brave General Novalichez, had just been cut to pieces at the Alcolea bridge. The enthusiasm of the Southern people for everything new showed itself in all the ways that the populace has of pouring out the overflow of its joy or its anger. Two days had sufficed to constitute a national guard, with its red shirts, sky-blue tunics and feathered felt hats; officers armed with sword-canes conducted these battalions, which carried old muskets or flint-locks of Charles the Third's time. The Marquis Rafael Saldana, Count of Torecilla and Grandee of Spain, was at heart a fervent supporter of Isabella, but he had never taken part in active politics. His great fortune would have enabled him to make one of those fine marriages which unite all the guarantees of happiness that a magnificent present can give to the uncertain future. But Don Rafael had always declined the offers of the old friends of his family under the pretext that, having loved once at twenty-two, he was absolutely incapable of loving a second time and did not want to make any woman unhappy. In this the Marquis committed a double error; first, because, deceived by the illusion of a fraternal friendship, his heart began to beat for his young cousin, Nieves de Santreras, who was a widow; and then because he was in every way well adapted to render a companion happy.

Don Rafael was thirty-five years old, a fine-looking

man, and wore all his dark beard; by his scrupulously correct dress, in the English style, he was in singular contrast with the affected elegance of his compatriots. Very skilful with arms, he had fought only two duels, and both for causes that did not touch him directly, but where the sentiment of justice had made him play an active part. In both cases he had killed his adversary. Since then no one had quarrelled with him, and in fact it would not have been an easy matter to do so, for he was a good comrade, a thorough man of the world, and never gave anybody a reason for becoming his enemy.

On the day when this story begins, the Marquis filled his cigar-case, took his revolver—a precaution never neglected at Grenada—and at two o'clock left his Carrera palace to take a walk and inspect the popular movement. The police force having been disbanded and the regular troops having joined the army in the field, the old city was entirely at the mercy of the mob. In the streets the crowds were shouting the Riego Hymn, which is the Spanish Marseillaise; some were addressing the multitude, others threw stones at the gas-lamps, as if they were to blame for the abuses charged against the fallen power. In the midst of this tumult the newspaper hawkers mingled their cries with those of the ragged bohemians who sold nopal figs and the nasal yells of the Alhambra water-sellers, dragging behind them their mules loaded with large jars covered with leaves. Finally gutter speculators offered injurious caricatures of the dethroned queen.

The Marquis noticed one of these peddlers, whose picture had enormous success. The crowd pressed around him to buy, and the print was passed from hand to hand with loud laughter. Don Rafael bought one and examined it carefully; then, without losing his temper, walked up to the seller, a sort of Hercules, and taking him by the shoulder, said: "Get down on your knees and repeat aloud, 'I beg pardon of Her Majesty the Queen.' "

The surprise of the peddler and his auditors may be

imagined. Everybody remained silent. Then, thinking it was a joke, each one began to laugh at his neighbor for being taken in.

"Did you hear me?" said the Marquis calmly. "I am not joking."

"This caballero is mad!" cried the man, and slipping from the Marquis's grasp by an energetic movement, he tried to run away; but the crowd, forming a compact ring, stopped him. Don Rafael seized the peddler again, and by a superhuman effort, the result of an inward anger that all strong-willed men know, forced him to kneel.

An immense yell rose from the crowd, and several persons came forward with their canes raised. Without letting go of his man, Don Rafael took out his revolver.

"Gentlemen," he said coolly, "I have six shots: two for this scoundrel, if he does not obey, and four for the first men who touch me."

A captain of the national guard advanced with his sabre in his hand. "Let that man alone!" he cried.

"Stand back, or upon my soul I will shoot!" and the Marquis took aim. The only reply of the captain was to raise his sabre. The Marquis fired. The captain, struck in the heart, reeled and fell dead. "And now," said the Marquis, addressing the peddler, whom he continued to hold by the shoulder, "beg the Queen's pardon."

The pistol-shot had caused a panic. The crowd ran back, and in the large vacant space, in silence and to the general stupefaction, they heard this man, the warm pistol-barrel against his temple and his eyes fixed upon the corpse, cry aloud:

"I beg pardon of Her Majesty the Queen!"

"Now," said the Marquis, "throw your caricatures down there. You certainly have a match. Yes? Set fire to those papers. Here is their value." And he gave the peddler an ounce of gold. Trembling and pale, the man took the gold, and then lighted the pile of caricatures. "Now get out!"

A concert of maledictions, equally divided between terror and rage, rose from the crowd of furious Spaniards. The Marquis did not seem to trouble himself about it; he helped along with his cane the burning embers at his feet as calmly as though he were at home burning a lot of old envelopes in the chimney-corner.

However, the clamors of the crowd soon recalled Don Rafael to himself. He took his revolver and advanced toward the rabble, which was yelling: "Death to the assassin! Let us carry him to prison!"

At the sound of the word assassin Don Rafael stopped, as if this insult had awakened an unexpected sensation within him. He turned back. The body of the unfortunate captain was stretched out on the ground, face downward. Blood reddened his clenched fingers and stained the white plume of his felt hat.

The Marquis became pale. "It is true, by the Virgin! I have killed him!" He looked at the corpse for a moment. Then, like a good Spaniard, he took off his hat and made the sign of the cross, after which he returned toward the crowd.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I have killed this captain, and am ready to give myself up to justice. I will go at once to the court-house."

"To the junta! to the junta!"

"To the junta, if you wish; it makes no difference to me. But if any one touches me I will begin again. Open the ranks!"

The crowd, subdued, made way, and Don Rafael, escorted, but at a distance, by the exasperated and trembling spectators, succeeded in reaching the Calle Saint Matias, where the junta held its sittings.

The mob, brave now that it was no longer held by the Marquis's firm regard, remained under the windows, increased from second to second by persons who did not know anything about the affair, but who informed the others so well that in twenty minutes the report was abroad that a gigantic conspiracy against liberty had been discovered.

During this time Don Rafael had mounted the stair-

case which, five minutes before, was full of national guards, who had now gone to the door to inquire the cause of the tumult; they were far from suspecting that the author of it was the tranquil gentleman whom they had just elbowed. An old national guard was seated at the first landing; he was one of the soldiers who had not quitted his post.

"Who is the president of the junta?" asked Don Rafael.

"Don Ramiro de la Fuente."

"Very well, take in my card; I wish to speak to him." In an instant Don Ramiro himself came. He knew Don Rafael personally, and asked himself if, by chance, he had been converted. The president had the Marquis at once admitted to his private office.

"What can I do for you, señor?" said he, holding out his hand to the Marquis; and he added with true Spanish politeness: "The position that they have had the kindness to give me is a very agreeable one, since it enables me to serve my country, but it will be still more agreeable if I can use it to be of service to you."

"I thank you for your good intentions, but I have come to be judged."

"What have you done?" asked the president, smiling. "A few strokes with the whip, perhaps; nothing serious?"

"Nothing serious! That depends. I have killed a captain of the national guard."

The president started, and turned pale. "I do not understand," he said.

"I even used this," and the Marquis placed his revolver upon the table.

"But under what circumstances?"

"Oh, they will tell you; there were five hundred spectators. Therefore, I desire to be judged. Only, as you were kind enough to offer your services a few moments ago, I shall be thankful if you will expedite the affair as much as possible."

"Listen, Don Rafael. Notwithstanding the difference in our political opinions, I consider that you are

a very honorable man. I entreat you to tell me the facts and we will decide what is to be done afterward."

"You wish to know them? Very well," replied the Marquis, and in a few words, with the wearied air of a man forced to tell an old story, he recounted the adventure.

"Don Rafael," said the president when the Marquis had finished, "no one except old Gomez saw you enter this office. He is devoted to me, and if I wish it, will say nothing. On the other hand, everybody knows that there are four or five exits to this building. Your disappearance would not compromise any one. Now, believe me, your case is a very bad one. Fly by the door that opens upon the little street of Navas. You will be hunted for in the house. During that time you will find horses at the house of your friend, Count Casareal, and try to reach Gibraltar. Do not lose a moment in thanking me; you can take your revenge if the political scale turns the other way. If you do not follow my advice and are tried, you are a lost man. Come, quickly; somebody is mounting the stairs."

"Thank you a thousand times, Don Ramiro, but, good or bad, I keep my place. I belong to a family the members of which have never run away, and if there can be found in Spain a court to condemn a man who has only done his duty as a gallant gentleman, my country is dead and I do not wish to survive it."

During this colloquy the noise had reached the antechamber. The door opened and a crowd of persons rushed in. Don Ramiro, an energetic man, went forward, and looking the invaders straight in the face, said:

"I know what you want. Let the witnesses go and inscribe their names at the Captain-General's office. The sentence will be given in two hours." As they hesitated, he said sharply in walking up to them: "Did you hear?" The crowd murmured, but went away.

Pale as death, the president, who appreciated the Marquis's character, looked at him sadly and sat down with a discouraged air. "It is all up now," he said.

"Bah! we shall see," replied Don Rafael. "But do not let me detain you any longer. Attend to your affairs, and I will wait here until the hour of trial. You need not have me guarded, for I do not wish to run away. Only, I shall be obliged if you will give me a newspaper and a glass of water."

Stupefied by this tranquil carelessness, Don Ramiro went out without finding anything to say, and soon returned with the *Epoca*. A guard brought the water. The Marquis lighted a cigar, and began to run over the leading article as attentively as if he were awaiting his turn with his doctor.

In revolutionary times military justice is quickly administered. Two hours later, at four o'clock, the indictment was prepared. The military court, composed of officers of the national guard, had assembled, and the accused took his seat; he had no counsel, and still held the *Epoca* in his hand. Don Rafael examined his judges, among whom he recognized his bootmaker, showily bedecked with gold lace. The Marquis shrugged his shoulders, and allowed the prosecuting officer to improvise a recital of the facts without adding an observation. Then, when the president wished to question him, he simply replied:

"Gentlemen, all interrogatory is useless. I admit the truth of what has just been told you. As for my defence, it may be abridged as follows: I took the part of a Spanish lady, queen or bourgeoise it does not matter, whom I saw shamefully insulted. I did so to obey the promptings of my conscience and for the honor of my country, and I have killed a man who, sabre in hand, wished to prevent this just reparation. I believe I have acted like a good Spaniard, and if I am judged by good Spaniards, my case is won. I have nothing to add, gentlemen; it is for you to decide."

The court decided, and pronounced the condemnation to death of the Marquis Rafael Antonio Gregorio Miguel Saldana, Count of Torrecilla; his execution was ordered to take place within twenty-four hours.

Let us leave our hero for an instant and go back a week. On that day—when the last troops faithful to Queen Isabella had left Grenada to rejoin Novalichez's army corps, and the republican junta had taken possession of the city—a strange scene occurred in one of the most curious estates in Grenada, La Cartuja.

La Cartuja was the former convent of the Chartreux. It is to-day a private residence, and is composed of two separate buildings and a chapel. This property belonged to the Countess Nieves de Santreras, whose name we mentioned at the beginning of this recital. The Countess was reclining on a wicker sofa under a veranda that overlooked her terraced gardens. It was half-past nine in the morning, and while taking her chocolate she played with one of the five or six parrots that were swinging around her in golden rings attached to the ceiling.

The Countess belonged to the seductive race of blonde Andalusians. She was a young widow, and an adorable creature. At the moment when she threw a bit of bread to Parquita, her favorite bird, Carmen, her maid, entered like a whirlwind.

"Señora! Señora! Santa Maria! The republic is proclaimed at Grenada! There's no longer a royalist soldier in the city; the junta has been appointed!"

Nieves did not wait to hear the conclusion. She got up and said smilingly: "Bring me the chapel key."

Carmen, astonished, did not move.

"Did you hear me? I told you to bring me the chapel key," repeated her mistress.

Carmen, recovering from her astonishment, went and brought the key to her mistress. Nieves started immediately for the sanctuary. But before entering, she went up into a pavilion that overlooked the neighborhood, and after having thrown an anxious look around, said to herself, "It's all right; the guards are no longer there."

She opened the door and went into the marvellous edifice. The solitary church, the rare windows of which admitted a meagre light, seemed with its waxen floor

and rich ornamentation to be a boudoir rather than a temple of God. The young woman opened the large cedar doors, inlaid with shell and brass, and passed without giving a look toward the divine Saint Bruno, vivified in wood by Alonzo Cano, and entered the vestry, inlaid with onyx and precious marbles.

There the light came copiously through six large windows. These windows had in each one of their embrasures an enormous Boulle bureau, with a curved front ornamented with tortoise-shell in relief. Opposite these six windows were six other embrasures in the wall, and each one contained a bureau exactly like those at the foot of each window. These twelve bureaux were formerly used by the twelve canons of the chapter.

The Countess went directly to the last one, and put a delicate little key into the lock of the first drawer. Instead of a drawer, the whole front of the bureau opened in two doors, and disclosed a sort of narrow hiding-place dug out of the ground and furnished with a small bed, a chair and a lamp. A velvet carpet covered the soil, some books and the remains of a repast were upon the table, as well as several empty bottles. A man was lying asleep upon the bed.

"General!" cried Nieves in a loud voice.

The man woke up suddenly with a start. "Do not cry so loud, Countess. You will have me discovered and taken."

The Countess replied by a burst of sonorous laughter. Then she said: "My old friend, you are free. The republic has been proclaimed at Grenada, as at Madrid. You are no longer hunted. The house is no longer surrounded. You can come out without danger from the hiding-place so happily invented by my late husband, and go to the capital and take possession of your post."

She had scarcely finished before the General, whom we will call Don Joaquin X., left his snug retreat and kissed her hand. "My dear child," said he, "a few nights ago you welcomed me at the moment when the Captain-General was about to have me arrested. You

concealed me; you exposed yourself, for your father's old friend, to all the annoyances of searches and domiciliary visits; in short, you, a royalist, daughter of one of the Queen's maids-of-honor, risked being accused of complicity with us. To-day I am in power. Countess, whatever you ask shall be granted. I simply say this in begging you to remember it."

"Then, my dear General," said Nieves, with her charming smile, "I ask you to immediately give me your arm to lead you to breakfast."

And the young woman conducted the old General under the veranda, where Carmen brought him the small cup of chocolate and the large glass of water and sugar, which constitute the first Spanish breakfast.

"You will admit, Don Joaquin, that it is gayer to take your chocolate on a terrace loaded with flowers, in the warm sunshine and under a beautiful blue sky, than to breakfast at the bottom of a bureau, even though it be a masterpiece. Ah! just think! You, the victor of Talevera and of San Juan del Mar, have lived in a bureau."

"By the way, what has become of my second deliverer? To him I owe a little life, and if he had not put my pursuers on the wrong scent for half an hour, I should not have been able to conceal myself before they had discovered their error and returned to your house."

"Don Rafael is always the same. I saw him two days ago, and he spoke to me of your escape as one of the most simple things in the world, and asked me about you."

"He has a very noble nature."

"He has the noblest nature in the world."

"My dear child, will you allow me to give you some advice?"

"Certainly."

"You love the Marquis Rafael Saldana."

"General!"

"It is not a question of General; you love the Marquis, and I hasten to add that you are perfectly right in doing so. You know my high esteem for him. Your

anxiety, which showed itself in spite of you, while he drew after him the spies that sought for me, leaves no doubt about your sentiments. And then, a woman in love has difficulty in concealing the fact, except, perhaps, from the one whom she loves. Now this is precisely your case. If it were a question of any one else, I should say conceal your sentiments, for men love what seems likely to escape them. With Don Rafael, who has a chivalrous and open character, I say—and this is the advice I asked permission to give you—let him see that you are not indifferent. He loves you unconsciously. To enlighten him, a spark is necessary, and it is from your heart that it ought to fly. Now, Countess, will you kindly send a servant to order a post-chaise immediately? for I must take the evening express at Menjibar so as to be in Madrid to-morrow."

The Countess remained pensive for a moment; then, with a beautiful smile, she said: "General, I hope that you will leave me a souvenir of your visit."

"Command, Countess."

"I want you to write an autograph in my album. Have you ever written any verses, General?"

"Never, thank Heaven!"

"Very well. As I want something original from you, I beg you to write me some crambos, for which I will give you the rhymes."

"What an idea! I might, perhaps, command an army, but make rhymes!"

"Well, you may lose the battle, but you must contest it." And Doña Nieves started off quickly to give the order for the post-chaise. She soon returned with an album, in which she wrote a dozen rhymes; then she put the book and pen into the hands of the old soldier, who protested for the last time and set about his task. Don Joaquin gave numberless thumps upon his cranium, and addressed numerous desperate appeals to Saint James of Calatrava. The first line came, and the second. But the others! All his efforts were in vain. And the young woman laughed and encouraged her guest by "Come, my poet!" which exasperated him

without exciting his fancy. And Paquita, who seemed to be pleased with the expression, repeated in her shrill voice:

"Come, Poet! Come, General!"

"Ah! I see that I do not inspire you. Sign at least what you have written."

"That would be ridiculous, but just." And the General placed a superb flourish at the foot of the page. "Now I'm off. Remember that you have at Madrid a friend for whom your slightest desire is an order."

Ten minutes later the mules, covered with bells, started off at a rapid trot, carrying the new War Minister toward Madrid. The Countess, alone, seated on her sofa, repeated dreamily: "Does Rafael love me?" And the parrot, inclining its pretty green head and winking its round, red eyes, repeated: "Come, Poet!"

Don Rafael's condemnation had simply astonished him. He was not afraid of death, and the feverish excitement caused by the accumulation of so many events in such a short time almost took away the sentiment of anguish which accompanies the certainty of approaching death. He was taken to prison, where, immediately after his arrival, he received a visit from Don Ramiro de la Fuente, who shook him silently by the hand.

The condemned man was touched by this disinterested sympathy. "Thank you," he said.

"What can I do for you?"

"Nothing. Ah, yes, there is a great thing that you can do for me, but I do not dare to ask you because you would risk too much in according it."

"Oh, no! Tell me what you desire."

"At what hour to-morrow will my execution take place? Oh, you can speak about it."

"Don Rafael, all hope is, perhaps, not lost."

"I repeat, Don Ramiro, that I have no illusions on the subject, and that you need not conceal anything from me now."

"Well, at one o'clock."

"At what place?"

"Upon the Triumfo Square."

"I have a thousand things to arrange, some injustices to repair, some personal papers to destroy so that no profane hand shall touch them after me. My situation has been so suddenly changed that I have not been able to take any of these precautions. I should, therefore, like to be at liberty until the hour of my death. I shall not have too much time in twenty-four hours, and I swear to you upon my honor as a gentleman to return to-morrow at one o'clock."

"You said just now that I should risk too much. With the word of a gentleman like yourself I risk nothing," replied the president. "Kindly wait five minutes. Only, to avoid a disturbance that your appearance might provoke, promise me not to show yourself."

"I promise."

Don Ramiro went out and soon returned with the warden of the prison.

"Señor," said the president to the officer, "Don Rafael Saldana is, as you know, condemned to death. Now, he asks to be set at liberty during the twenty-four hours that remain for him to live. He has given his word of honor to be exact to-morrow, and I respond for him upon my head. To protect you I will sign an order of leave. Kindly bring me paper and writing materials."

The warden bowed and spoke to a guardian in the entry, who brought paper, ink, and pens. Don Ramiro signed the order; then, turning toward the prisoner, said: "Marquis, you are free; my carriage will wait for you at the private door of the warden's garden and take you to your house."

Some minutes later the carriage stopped in front of Don Rafael's residence. "You are the most charming man that I know," said the Marquis, on alighting. The president raised his eyes at this strange phrase. Evidently, Don Rafael considered his intervention as one of those simple acts of politeness that people in polite

society owe to each other. "I regret," continued the Marquis, "that I have not a son to whom I can bequeath my gratitude, for mine will be short."

"Would to Heaven that I could do more!"

And the two men shook each other's hands energetically.

Once within his house Don Rafael found everything in the usual order. The events had passed so quickly that nothing had yet leaked out about them. The servants were at their posts, the dinner was ready, and when the Marquis found himself in his comfortable library, he was inclined for a moment to believe that all was only a bad dream from which he had just awakened.

He sat down in an arm-chair and began to meditate. He was slightly pale, and a single tear soon rolled down upon his beard. He was drawn from his revery by loud knocks on the outside door. He ran to the window which commanded a view of the court-yard, and cried out to his domestic: "Frasco, I cannot see anybody."

But it was too late. Frasco had already opened the door, and a joyous voice replied: "Except those whom you have invited to dinner, I suppose?"

"Ah!" said the Marquis to himself, "that will be a change. And it will be very extraordinary to have friends at dinner on the eve of my execution."

He received the two visitors, and ten minutes afterward they sat down to dinner. But in spite of the brilliant conversation of the guests, Don Rafael was sad and gloomy, although he made superhuman efforts to conceal his trouble. His friends noticed his anxiety, and thinking that he was disturbed about some private affair, discreetly left him at an early hour.

When he was alone, Don Rafael began to think about arranging his affairs. He had no near relatives, and left all his fortune to "his cousin and tenderly loved friend, whom he considered as a sister, the Countess Nieves of Santreras." He constituted a life income for the wife and children of Captain Gomez, barber by

trade, the man whom he had killed, "as a feeble reparation for the immense loss he had caused them." To Don Ramiro he left as a grateful souvenir his splendid collection of antique cameos.

The Marquis passed a part of the night in attending to these various cares, and naturally had not thought of sleeping. He took down from the shelf a work by Garcia Lopez upon the future life, and read a dozen pages. Then he threw the book aside, saying: "In twelve hours I shall know more about it than all the Benedictines in the world!"

Eight o'clock struck. Don Rafael took his accustomed bath, had his chocolate sent up as usual, and, as though he wished to gather strength to walk firmly to the punishment, ordered his breakfast for ten o'clock.

"It is singular," he said to himself, "now that the sun is up, how well I feel. Bah! it is not such a great thing to die when you are not indispensable to anybody and do not regret any one. Any one? No, I will not deceive myself. Poor Nieves! I know that she has a great deal of affection for me, and I, too, have a great deal for her—a little too much, perhaps. I can at least have the satisfaction of seeing her before I die."

In the mean while the Marquis had the newspapers brought to him. The sentence having been pronounced late in the day, the morning journals simply mentioned a grave fact concerning one of the members of high Grenada society; but they gave only a few confused details, without printing any name. He sent one of his servants to the Countess to know if he could be received notwithstanding the early hour. Doña Nieves sent word that she would receive him at noon. "At noon!" he said to himself. "And it's for one o'clock! In that case I shall not have time to go to the prison first. I must arrange that." So he wrote the following letter to the military commander of the city:

"GENERAL: At liberty upon parole until the hour of my execution, I have the honor to inform you that I shall be at the Triumfo at one o'clock precisely. You can, besides,

send an officer, who will not quit me until the moment fixed for the execution.

"Pray accept, General, my sincere respects.

"MARQUIS RAFAEL SALDANA."

He sealed with a firm hand this missive, wherein he spoke of his death as though it were an invitation to a ball, and sent it by his valet. At ten o'clock the valet returned. "What did the commandant say?"

"He said that there was no reply."

"No reply?" Then, speaking to himself, "It appears that they really have confidence in my word."

There was something else than confidence in the General's silence. He secretly desired to see Don Rafael escape death, and he hoped that the Marquis's love of life would be stronger than his pledged word. But this officer did not know Don Rafael.

At half-past eleven, after having forced himself to eat something, the Marquis went out in his closed carriage. At noon he was at La Cartuja, and found the Countess under her veranda reading Caballero's latest novel. He saw at once by her calmness that she knew nothing about his situation. So he said to her that as he was about to undertake a long and perilous voyage —he spoke of an exploring expedition to Morocco—he had come to take leave.

With such a beginning the interview was naturally a sad one. The Countess could not restrain her tears. When the moment for parting came, the Marquis held out his hand; his heart, full of dormant love, experienced a violent burning sensation. Love was awakening. He looked at Nieves with a deep and penetrating regard. Then, full of tears, he said, "Give me a kiss, it will be the last!"

She did not hesitate; she held out her lips and said, "Do not go."

"Perhaps," he said, and rushed away, suddenly intoxicated with love and regret for this beautiful woman, and possibly remorse that he had not sooner comprehended her. He was feverish with the noble

fever of a man loved and loving. He jumped into his carriage and said to his coachman: "To the Triumfo!"

Left alone, Nieves, trembling, communed with herself. Her soul hesitated between happiness and fear. He loved her. Would he, then, go away? No; it was a test. And yet she felt her heart pressed by an indescribable anguish; by a vague sentiment of fear such as at the approach of a great misfortune stifles one. She heard a quick step in the garden; she felt that the misfortune had come, and arose trembling. It was Carmen, running, pale and out of breath.

"What is it?"

"Señora, Don Rafael has just left here!"

"Well, speak!"

"He is going to be shot! He is condemned to death. He was let out on parole until one o'clock. He killed a captain of the national guard, yesterday. I was told all this by Antonio Rivas, sergeant in the national guard, who is the commandant's orderly."

"It is impossible!"

"I have just come from the Triumfo. The troops are ready; a battalion of the rural guards arrived there this morning. Telegrams have been sent to Madrid asking for a pardon."

"Who has sent them?"

"Don Ramiro de la Fuente; but the reply will not arrive in time."

Nieves, white as a ghost, did not say a word; falling upon her knees, she prayed mechanically, feeling herself powerless. At that moment she heard a flapping of wings, and a shrill voice said:

"Come, Poet; come, General!"

Nieves looked steadily at her parrot; then, uttering a cry, she got up suddenly and rushed into the house.

"Have the horses harnessed at once!" she cried. "Let every one help!"

In three minutes she came out adjusting her mantilla. The servants were aiding the coachman. She herself took hold of the harness and wounded her white hands with the heavy straps. In the twinkling of an

eye the carriage was ready. And in her turn she said to the coachman:

"To the Triumfo!"

As soon as he was in his carriage, the Marquis reflected that it would look like bravado to arrive at the place of death in his carriage. Having a horror of making a show, he said to the coachman:

"Stop behind the infantry barracks."

The Triumfo is a large square, partly occupied by gardens. At the right are the barracks; at the left, the road leading to the Seville railway station; and at the end, the road going to La Cartuja. The square was entirely covered with people. The report of the execution had been spread for some hours, and the rural guard had great difficulty in keeping back the crowd, which had invaded the gardens, climbed upon the iron railings and even upon the monument which occupies the centre. The large empty space in front of the barracks was surrounded on three sides by a double line of soldiers. The fourth side was formed by the wall. The firing squad was in the centre with its arms at rest. At the farther end, in a closed carriage, Don Ramiro, pale, looked toward the city, awaiting a despatch from Madrid, ready to stop all at the arrival of a courier, and not doubting for a second that his prisoner would return.

The Marquis alighted in the little street running into the square. He took out his watch; it was five minutes of one. For a moment he gazed into the sunny heaven.

"What a pity!" he murmured.

Then, overcoming this last feebleness, he said to his coachman: "Return home and tell the major-domo to read the letter that he will find addressed to him upon my table, and to carry the others to their destination." And as the coachman, an old servitor, was turning his horses, Don Rafael added: "Good-bye, my excellent Pepe!"

Walking quickly, the Marquis reached the line of soldiers. A corporal stopped him.

"Where are you going?"

"To speak to the officer."

"What about?"

"About the execution."

"Is your presence necessary?"

"Slightly, my brave man. I am the one to be executed." And leaving the corporal dumfounded, he entered the square and walked with a firm step straight to the officer in command.

He was quickly recognized by a large number of the spectators, and an immense clamor rose from the people, who expected to see him arrive in a carriage, escorted by guards. Then there was a silence.

"Señor," said the captain, taking off his hat, "I am about to perform a sad duty. But first allow me in the face of everybody to shake the hand of the noblest man whom I know."

"I thank you, Captain, but that would be too dangerous for you."

"It is a favor that I ask of you; it will spare me remorse."

"You are a real caballero. Here is my hand."

A dull murmur welcomed the officer's act.

"Now I am ready."

"Do you wish to have your eyes bandaged?"

"It is useless. Where shall I stand?"

"Here, señor." And the captain pointed to the wall of the barracks. "Will you give the command to fire, Marquis?"

"Thank you, Captain; give the order yourself."

After having made a sign of the cross, the Marquis placed himself before the wall. The execution squad was ready. The officer moved back. Every one became silent, and in the awful stillness they heard the sharp cry of a martin that flew across the blue sky.

At this moment a loud noise arose from the side of the little street near the barracks by which Don

Rafael had come. Before the captain had time to give the first order a strong pressure broke the line of soldiers and crowded the firing platoon. The mob filled the square, and the officer, thinking it was an attempt on the part of the people to lynch the condemned man, rallied with great difficulty a sufficient number of soldiers to surround him.

The real cause of the movement was quite different. A carriage drawn by two horses arrived on a gallop. The coachman with great presence of mind managed to direct his horses around the gardens, and the crowd, falling back in terror, opened a large space. When the coachman passed before Don Rafael, pale and leaning against the wall, the Marquis recognized Pepe.

During the few moments of commotion caused by this incident, another carriage had time to rejoin that of Don Rafael.

At the moment the soldiers had succeeded in re-forming their square, when the firing squad had taken their places and the officer was about to give the order, "Aim!" Don Ramiro entered the square and cried, "Stop!" Then, mounting on a stone, he addressed the multitude as follows:

"Citizens, last night I telegraphed to Madrid, as it was my duty to do, the sentence of the court-martial, which condemned Don Rafael Saldana to be shot. A courier from Madrid, who has come by the Menjibar express and post relays, arrives this very instant with an order from the Minister of War to suspend the execution. I will read you the order:

"'To the President of the Junta:

"'Suspend the execution of the Marquis Saldana and await new instructions.

"'General Joaquin X.

"'Madrid, Sept. 19, 1868.'"

After the reading of this order some of the spectators cried out:

"It isn't true! The order hasn't had time to arrive. You want to save him because he is a noble!"

"Citizens, is there any one among you who knows the minister's signature? If so, let him step forward and recognize it."

Three old soldiers of the Aragon regiment, of which General Joaquin had been colonel, came forward and, after having examined the document, declared that the signature was genuine.

In spite of this affirmation, the popular fury increased. But Don Ramiro had seen a good many mobs in his life as a revolutionist. He knew how to handle a crowd. He began a discourse, spoke of Regulus, of the Carthaginians, of the Romans; he represented to the valiant citizens of loyal Grenada that their dear city could compete with ancient Rome because it had its citizen who returned freely and gave himself up to death. The Grenadians did not wish to imitate that oligarchical den called Carthage. They would accord forgiveness, especially as Don Rafael would royally repair the damage caused to Captain Gomez's family. And then, liberty ought to show itself generous in its aurora. A few words added upon glory, patriotism, and the triumph of the people completed the discourse.

From all sides rose cries of "Down with Carthage! Long live Saldana!"

An hour later Don Rafael returned home, triumphantly escorted by those who had come to see him die.

The first person whom he met upon entering his house was Nieves, who had only left the Triumfo when she saw events taking a favorable turn. Broken down by all these emotions, she had fallen into an arm-chair.

"There," said Don Ramiro, who had accompanied the Marquis, "is your deliverer!"

As soon as she could command herself, Doña Nieves recounted what had taken place: "You know that when we saved Don Joaquin X., I asked him jokingly to give me some crambos for my album. He succeeded in writing only two, and signed his name at the foot of

the page. As I had placed twelve rhymes, there was a large white space."

"In a word," interrupted Don Ramiro, "you had a *blanc seing* from the General."

"Which I had less scruple in using, as in leaving me the General said, out of gratitude for what I had done for him: 'Command, and you shall be obeyed.' But I should never have thought of that signature had it not been for my parrot Paquita."

The two men appeared astonished.

"Just think," she continued, "that when Carmen told me what had taken place and that you had gone from my house to the Triumfo, I had not even the time to make any effort for your release; I had only one idea, which was to pray. While I prayed, Paquita repeated a phrase that I had said to Don Joaquin during the time that he was composing the crambos: 'Come, Poet; come, General!' These words made me think of the General and of the circumstances under which I had spoken them. I saw in my mind the large white page, the rhymes at the right, the two lines at the top, and the signature at the foot. I immediately ran and got the book. To cut out the written part and have my major-domo fill in the white space, was the work of an instant. I jumped into my carriage, trembling for fear that I should arrive too late. From the height overlooking the square I saw you speaking to the officer, who took off his hat and shook your hand. This sight gave me a moment's calm. I met your coachman, who, having at last comprehended the situation, was on his way to my house weeping like a child. I cried out to him: 'Where is Don Ramiro?' 'Near the hospital, at the end of the square,' he replied: 'I have just passed by him.' 'Rush your horses into the crowd so as to make a tumult and thus gain time; if you succeed, your master is saved!' I had not finished before Pepe, whipping up his horse, arrived at the Triumfo. Profiting by this respite, I went to Don Ramiro's carriage, placed the order in his hands and said to him: 'I

have not time to give you any explanations, but I swear to you that the signature is genuine.' The rest you owe to Don Ramiro de la Fuente."

Don Rafael pressed passionately to his breast the one who had saved him, and shook hands with the president. He had completely forgotten his coolness, and it must be admitted that there was good reason for his so doing. He stuffed the pockets of his domestics with gold, and when Pepe returned with his foundered horses, threw himself into his old coachman's arms.

That very evening a post-chaise conveyed the two lovers to France, where they were married. They afterward learned that at the end of that famous day a full pardon had arrived from Madrid for Don Rafael. In the different governments that have since been in power, Don Joaquin has managed to be minister in all the cabinets. Carmen has married the sergeant, who has become Don Rafael's coachman, under the orders of Pepe, promoted to be honorary coachman.

Here is a new version of one of Shakespeare's plays. It has been written for ROMANCE by R. L. Ketchum.

"UNC' PETAH P'TROOSHO."

"WHA' fo' dey calls me Petah P'troosho? Ain' yo' nebah year dat?

"Marse Gawge gub me dat name, down in Faginny, endu'in' wah-time. Marse Gawge gre't man ter gib we all noo names. I done had mo'n 'leben, I guess, on'y P'troosho de on'y one 'sides Petah dat stick ter me. W'en Miss Alice gub me suit er Marse Gawge's clo'es, wid red necktie an' plug hat, Marse Gawge he laff an' say he gotter call me Boobrumm'l, an' so he do fo' long time, eb'ry day I dress up. Den, one time w'en I gwine ter mill, de ol' hosses dey git scart, an' run plumb ter mill an' back ergin; an' atter dat, eb'ry time Marse Gawge see me wid de bay team, he hollah, 'Hullo, Gilping!'

"Nodah time, w'en I bin fussin' aroun' in de garrit, I foun' er ol' muff, wha' ol' Miss done frow erway, an' ax Miss Alice kin I hab 'm, case it jes' de ting w'en I hatter go set b' Pomp, de dribah, on col' days w'en Marse Gawge an' Miss Alice go dribin'. Miss Alice she say I kin, so nex' col' day, w'en dey hatter go ter Marse Willie's, I war de muff. 'N Marse Gawge, he seen 'm, an' say, 'Hullo, Rushinbow! W'en you come f'm France?'

"But w'y he call me 'P'troosho?' I dunno, 'zackly, but Marse Gawge do. He kim ter me one day, an' say, 'Petah, whuffer yo' don' git merried ergin?' Marse Gawge allus sayin' tings right plumb out ter we all, jes' lak dat.

"An' I say: 'Marse Gawge, I ain' speakin' no names, but does yo' 'membah er suttin pusson dat am now gone erway f'm disher wale ob teahs, an' whatter mis'-able tempah dat pusson had? An' do o' 'membah

dat w'en dat suttin pusson was libin', folkses dat libed wid her gotter stan' 'roun'? No, sah, I doesn't caffer any mo', tank yo', Marse Gawge. 'Sides, I's ergittin' too ol' fo' sich nonsensical tings.'

"Marse Gawge he laff. 'W'y, Petah,' he say, 'yo' is on'y 'bout fifty. Yo' young man yit. Now, me 'n' Miss Alice bin tinkin' dat 'twould be nice ting ef Cl'rindy 'n' yo'all 'd git married. 'Twould sorter mek it mo' c'nveeniunt, an' all dat.'

"I dunno whatter say ter dat. Dat Cl'rindy was lakly-lookin' an' right smaht, but she got jes' sich a tempah as I done had 'speriunce wid. So I look 't Marse Gawge an' say: 'Mh! Golly, chile, dat niggah wuss'n de odah one I done menshun. How yo' spose I kin stan' dat?'

"Marse Gawge he stop 'n' tink fer wile. Den he say: 'Petah, I's 'feared yo' done let yerse'f be hain-peck'. Lemme tell yo', Petah, dat de on'y way ter be boss am ter 'sert yo'se'f an' don' let no woman mek yer stan' 'roun' lak Aunt Debby done. Dey was er man oncet, whar name was P'troosho, an' he right smaht man. Well, dey merry him ter gal wha' got mo' tempah 'n er settin'-hen. My! she war tur'ble! So P'troosho, w'en he git all hitch, 'gin ter train dat 'oman. Ef she git mad, he git mad too, 'r 'tend dat he is, an' he jes' raise de ol' Nick wuss'n her. Ef she say it col' day, he say she lie, dat de day am mis'ably wahm. Ef he don' lak he dinner, he tek 'n frow it on de floh, an' bre'k de dishes. He hollah at dat 'oman, an' boss 'er 'roun', an' bullyrag twell dat 'oman don' know 'er name. By 'm' by she git so dat w'en P'troosho tell 'er, in broad daylight, dat de sun am de moon, she b'liebe 'im, an' willin' ter sw'ar ter it. Ef he call 'Kate!' she mos' brek 'er naik, comin' ter see whuffer he call.

"'Now, Petah, dat's de way ter do, ef er fool 'oman ac' lak dat. In dat way, yo' kin bre'k 'em ob deir tricks in 'bout two days.'

"I t'ought erwhile, an' mek up my min' dat war gre't scheme; so I say ter Marse Gawge, 'Marse Gawge, ef

yo' 'n' Miss Alice sesso, I do dat, an' see how yo' plan wuk.'

"So w'en Chris'mus kim, me 'n' Cl'rindy stan' up in de pollah ob de big house, an' de w'ite pahson merry us, same lak he done Marse Willie an' Miss Blanche; an' atter dat we all hab big time in de hall, twell mos' mawnin'.

"I had er house back b' de cook-house, whar me 'n' Debby done lib fer mo'n twenty year, an' me 'n' Cl'rindy we mobed in dar. Marse Gawge done gub us new cheers an' table an' stobe, an' Miss Alice she let us hab new cyarpet, wha' she don' want in up-staihs hall no mo'; so we all was fix up right smaht.

"Cl'rindy war jes' sweet 's p'simmons fo' mo'n er week. Den, one day, she git outer de baid wrong way, an' w'en I look 't her, I know dat 'oman is mad. I di'n' lak dat, ca'se I hab my min' all mek up dat w'en she 'gin dat mad bizniss, she gotter hab less'n, an' I don' lak ter gub it ter her. But I don' say nuffin', on'y mek up my min' ter let 'er go twell she git sassy, den shek 'er off'n dat high hoss.

"W'en we waitin' on table at dinnah, Marse Gawge he kin see dat Cl'rindy am hot, an' he wink at me, lak dis. Atter dinner, w'en he cotch me erlone, he say, 'Well, P'troosho, is yo' git de shoe tamed?' Den he laff.

"I say, 'What shoe does yo' mean, sah? I don' know nuffin' 'bout no shoe.'

"Den Marse Gawge laff some mo', an' say, 'I di'n' say no shoe, Petah. I mean, is yo' had ter 'gin Cl'rindy's less'ns yit? I kin see she mad wid someting.'

"I tell 'im I ain' staht trainin' yit, but it look lak I hab ter, right quick.

"'Petah,' Marse Gawge say, reel sollum, 'don' was'e no time in disher 'ffaih. De moment de trubble stahts in, yo' staht in, too.' An' I say I will. But dey ain' no row dat day.

"Nex' day war Sund'y, an' I di'n' hatter git up eahly, so I lay een de baid twell mos' haff-pas' eight. Den I git up an' 'gin ter tog out. Cl'rindy war settin' lookin' outer de doah, lookin' mad. Pret' soon I say,

'Cl'rindy, whar mah bes' Sunday shuht, wid ruffles on?' Cl'rindy ans' back, reel shoht, she ain' see no sich shuht.

"'Yo' ain'?' I say. 'Oman, di'n' I say ter yo' dat I wan' dat shuht ter w'ar on Sund'y, an' di'n' yo' say yo' 'ten' ter it? Tell me dat, will yo'?'

"But she ain' say nuffin' 'tall. She jes' set an' star' outen de doah, jes' lak I ain' dar.

"Den I say, 'Look yere, yo' yaller numbskull, ef yo' don' tuhn 'roun' yere an' ans' me quick, I tek'n' shek yo' twell dem ol' teef rattle outen yo' haid!'

"Den she jump up, quick, an' kim at me. 'Wha' dat yo' say, yo' brack niggah? Wha' dat? Talk ter me 'bout shekkin' folks, will yo'?'

"Mistah, is yo' ebah see er reel mad 'oman? I 'gin ter git scar't, dat Cl'rindy look so mad, an' w'en she git so close ter me I put out mah han' ter push 'er 'way f'm me.

"Dat 'oman reach out an' grab me wid bofe han's by de naik, an' ef she di'n' shek *me* twell mos' all *my* teef drap out, I hope ter die. Den she hit me slam-bang wid 'er fis', er couple times, an' biff me all ober de house, an' lam me jes' tur'ble. Ki! but dat 'oman war pow'ful strong!

"W'en she git froo, she say: 'Look yere, ol' man, I hatter stan' 'buse f'm Tawm, but I ain' gotter stan' none f'm you. Don' yo' disr'membah dat, niggah.' An' she look lak 'er mad all ober wid, but I ain' wai' ter fin' out. I jes' git outen de house an' inter de yahd.

"Marse Gawge kim 'round inter de back yahd jes' den. 'Hullo, P'troosho,' he say, 'is yo' bin tamin' dat shoe? Yo' look lak yo' bin fightin' win'-mills.'

"'Marse Gawge,' I say, 'I ain' bin fightin' wid no win'-mills, an' I ain' bin doin' nuffin' wid no shoes. I jes' hatter gib dat yaller niggah wench er less'n, an' she ain' tek ter it, nohow. Dat P'troosho way mout wu'k wid w'ite folks, but w'en er fool niggah try 'm on 'nodah fool niggah, de debbil am ter pay.'

"Marse Gawge mos' die f'm laffin'. Den he say, 'No, Petah, yo' don' look lak yo' made er gre't s'ccess ob it.'

"An' atter dat he allus call me, 'Petah P'troosho.'"

The following graphic and humorous picture of life among the Spanish peasants has been translated for ROMANCE by Rollo Ogden from the original by José María de Pereda. It is worthy to rank among the sketches of English humble life by Blackmore and Barrie, the Scandinavian studies of Bjornsen, the Russian *moujïk* portraitures of Tourgueneff, and the French village types of Beissier and Emanuel Aréne.

AT THE FIRE-LIGHT RECEPTION.

THE little village of Alenza boasts thirty houses. It is divided into three neighborhoods, and in each one of these there is a perfect model of what I call a spinning-bee. Let us single out any one of the three, by chance; say the one in Uncle Selmo Lombío's house.

Selmo, or Anselmo, Lombío is a poor workingman, who has hard work to raise corn enough to last him through the year; consequently he is not so much as what is called a well-to-do person. But he has never known what it is to be in a bad temper, he has no vices nor anything of the kind, nor has he, much to his sorrow, any children to ask bread of him, although for more than thirty years he has been united in honorable marriage to Aunt Ramona Maizales. Her character is cut after the same pattern as his.

Both of them profess true and earnest faith in the saying that "human folks were made for intercourse and friendship;" and, in short, do not at all agree that the poor man, exhausted by his daily labor, should have no other comfort than to fall a-snoring upon a wretched bed at the hour when the chickens go to roost. And in proof that they do not say so for the mere pleasure of opening their mouths, no sooner is the corn harvested, and the fall grass cut, and the wheat threshed, and no sooner do the thatched roofs begin to weep down drop by drop in the morning the dew that has fallen in the night, than you find them inviting to their kitchen every neighbor who may choose to favor it with

his presence. And the people round about, exceedingly careful not to slight the invitation, eagerly accept it, and even make it the fashion to do so in that rustic society.

If you ask about Uncle Selmo's spinning-bees, his neighbors will tell you, one after another, or all together if you prefer it,

"Magnificent! The very best!"

In that hospitable kitchen were infallibly to be found every night throughout the winter, besides chance visitors, the following notabilities:

Tanasio Mirojos. He is a man well along in years, of a tall figure, though not of a very elegant bearing, only a middling workman, but a most excellent carter. He likes very much to be posted as to all that is going on in the world, and he is a perfect storehouse of stories and tales.

Pólito Redondo. He is a square-shouldered fellow, with a narrow forehead, shaggy hair and beard, a complexion like a lemon, and an understanding of the thickest.

Lencio, Cencio, Delencio, or Endilencio, whichever you choose, for he will answer to any name except the one he was baptized with, namely, Indalecio. He is hardly forty-five years old, never smokes, nor votes, nor gets angry. His forte is oratory, and as he is also a man of great learning, he answers off-hand all the scientific, historical, orthographical, and etymological questions about which he is consulted. He can wield the pen like a school-master, and no problem can balk him, from simple and long division up to fractions and partnership inclusive.

Gorio Tejares. An ex-soldier of the national army, he has knocked about extensively, and allows no one to make fun of him. He was intimate, while he was in the service, with all the Generals you can ask him about.

Polido. Short, with flabby and crooked legs and protruding lips, badly dressed and worse fed. His passion is to make others believe, at all hours of the day, that he has just dined, and that he is bursting with satiety.

Uncle Ginojo. Older than the small-pox, stone-deaf in one ear and hard of hearing in the other, and without a glimmer of memory; he falls asleep as soon as he sits down.

Silguero. A forward young man, an irresistible gallant, an accomplished dancer, and above all a famous singer of *Kyries*, *Glorias* and *Credos* in high mass—a skill which is his greatest pride.

Aunt Cimiana. Tanasio's wife; she has "glory in her hands" for cutting petticoats and waists, and for that reason is the only dressmaker in the village.

Sabel. A strong and buxom girl, with broad shoulders and hips, laughing eyes and a ready tongue.

Chiscona. A worthy mate for Pólito, and there is no need of saying anything more about her.

Clavellina. The opposite of Sabel, tiny, blushing, very neat, and somewhat retiring.

Mari-Juana. A woman six feet tall, thin and faded, famous for her knack at salting pork and curing illness.

And Rijiosa. Polido's estimable better-half, with a dreadful temper, but with peculiar skill in sowing grain in furrows, and dressing flax.

That is to say, the choicest of the good society of the neighborhood.

The women go to the spinning-bee with distaffs and hanks of cleaned flax. The only exception is Aunt Cimiana, who usually takes along something for her needle and scissors to work at. The men carry nothing, or, at the most, pieces of wood from which to whittle out lynch-pins, or a bunch of twisted osiers to be turned into the rough leggins of the province. For the accommodation of the guests, there are three long oak benches in Uncle Selmo's kitchen, well smoke-stained, and they, together with the seat built into the wall, form a roomy rectangle, within which burns the fire right upon the floor.

Aunt Ramona's greatest happiness is to see the last of her guests arrive, and then to contemplate them filling the three benches in her kitchen. In order fittingly to celebrate such joyful moments, she takes from the

heap of wood in the corner the best thorn-branch, and throws it upon the large brands which are beginning to kindle upon the earthen floor. The feeble, flickering flame seizes upon the dry thorns, and quickly a column of fire goes crackling up to the very flooring of the garret, lighting up the faces of the company against the dark, gleaming background of the smoky walls, in a way that would delight Rembrandt, if he could come back from the dead to look upon the scene.

With this ceremony the reception is opened every night. The women take advantage of the light to get their skeins ready; the men, their games, knives, and bits of wood. The next thing is very often the reciting of the prayers of the rosary, winding up with a petition for every one who has died in the village. In any case, it is certain that, before a half-hour has passed, things will take about the following course:

"Now, Uncle Tanasio, one of your good ones!"

"Something to make us laugh!"

"Let it be about robbers and witchcraft, for that is the most interesting kind."

"Let it be whatever he wishes, you great teasers!"

"If you said it would be what I know, you would be nearer the truth."

Tanasio is a man who likes to be urged, in such cases, as he thinks that otherwise his talent will not be properly appreciated.

"Pshaw! Don't say that. You know more stories than anybody alive."

"But I have told them all to you already."

"All but those which you have left in your head."

"I am a good deal afraid there isn't one left. However, if I must, let us see if, by squeezing and squeezing, something or other won't come out."

A profound silence. Tanasio is meditating. After a bit, he says,

"Well, then, I will tell you the story of a shepherd. There was a shepherd in the land of the Gentiles; and being a shepherd——"

"What are Gentiles?" asks Pólito.

"Why, Gentiles," responds Tanasio, somewhat put to it, and looking at Cencio, "Gentiles, in my way of looking at it, must be—this way—as one would say—isn't that so, Cencio? What'll you bet Cencio doesn't know it, too?"

Cencio, with an air of the most inflated importance, unceremoniously thrusts in the following explanation:

"Gentiles, it is well known, are some people who live in aquatic islands, and are giants, very strong in their bodily appearance, and—and they have no churches nor priests either, and they eat each other, when they take a notion."

"Do you hear that, Pólito? Why, the very children in the school know as much as that."

"But I never went to school, and that's the reason I ask. Now I know all about it."

"Are you sure you do?"

"You needn't think I am so stupid! Why, the thing doesn't seem to me to need much study. The Gentiles are some bodily beings that live in churches and eat aquatic giants."

"Gracious Powers!"

"What, is not that it?"

"Oh, yes, man alive, yes!"

"I thought from your laughing so that I had got it wrong. And what is this aquatic—no offence meant by the question? I suppose it must be some kind of caramel or candy."

"Aquatic," responds Endilencio seriously, "comes from the great seas—for these islands of the Gentiles are in the midst of the waters of the seas——"

"So then, the islands are a sort of boats."

"Islands," adds the learned man, "are some places that are uncultivated, where there are many thickets; and there are almost as many aquatic as solid islands; only then they call them Philippines because they are in the land of the Moors."

The difficulty is thus settled, and Tanasio goes on:

"Being a shepherd in the land of the Gentiles, this shepherd they say knew all the plants that grow, and

wrought cures with them in a way that you would like to see. If you have a pain anywhere, he just rubs you with the herb that is called for, and there you are, well. If that man there has a boil, well, sir, on goes the herb, and off with it in a minute. And so the fact was that everybody thought everything of the shepherd on account of his medicines, and for that reason all the surgeons and apothecaries for twenty leagues around couldn't bear him.

"Well, sir, you must know that this shepherd did not go down to the village except on Sundays, and as he was very good-looking and a splendid dancer, after the rosary he used to go to the dancing-ground, and there he used to dance all the afternoon with the same girl, on account of which the two got very fond of each other and agreed that, if he was not drafted, they would be married.

"Very good. My beloved friends, it happened one afternoon that my shepherd was on the mountain when a traveller came up to him who was as finely dressed as you could see. And he quickly says to the shepherd, 'I say, good friend, can you perhaps tell me where a shepherd is who they say lives around here and cures all sorts of diseases?' 'You are talking to him, good traveller,' says the shepherd. The other jumps when he hears that, and says, 'Do you want to come with me and earn as much money as you can think of?' 'If it is not far, I will go right away.' 'It is to the king's palaces.' 'Who is sick there?' 'A daughter of mine whom I love like the skin of my heart. Two years she has been in bed, all the best doctors have treated her, I have spent more than a hundred-and-fifty dollars on them, and the girl is only worse and worse and worse. A diviner told me that only you could cure her, and I have been looking for you all over.' 'And who are you?' then put in the shepherd. 'I am the king of the Gentiles,' replied the traveller, very like a king.

"Friends, when the shepherd heard that, he saw that his fortune was made, and he resolved to follow the king in the hope of earning at least three hundred dol-

lars to hire a substitute in case he should be drafted. So they went off together, after the king had helped him get in his cattle so as to be ready sooner, and they walked and walked till after three days they reached the palaces. And when they reached the palaces, they went to see the sick girl, who they say was as beautiful as the sun, so beautiful she was, lying on that silver bed with its gilded mattress. The shepherd only looked at her, and, without touching her or anything, said: 'The girl has this and that. We'll give her such a herb in this way and the other, and in two weeks' time she will be as strong as she ever was.'

"While all this was going on, the good shepherd was lodged in a room beautifully furnished, had a flowing robe put on like those of the chief lords, had whatever he wanted to eat, with his stew of peas and meat every day, his wine at ten cents a bottle, and candy and cake just scattered over the floor, as you might say. With all this high living, the shepherd, who was good-looking anyway, got to be a fearfully handsome fellow, and as he used to go so often into the room of the king's daughter, she fell desperately in love with him. So much so that after a week she was hemming handkerchiefs for him and brushing his clothes.

"Well, beloved friends, the king's daughter kept getting better and better and better, until before the two weeks were up she went out to take the sun in a glass balcony which opened into the king's garden. And one day the girl says to the king, 'Father, I am in love with the one who has cured me, and if you please, I would like to marry him.' And the king says to her, for he was very good and thought the world of her, that he has no objection to it; only, the marriage must not take place till she is as sound as a bell, and if, supposing a case, she should die from a relapse, the shepherd was to be hung.

"Well, beloved friends, as the shepherd was very certain of the medicines he was giving, he signed the agreement before the notary, without once thinking of that poor girl who was waiting for him at home as anx-

iously as for the rain in May. This girl knew nothing about what was going on, but a witch who was a neighbor of hers called her in and told her all about it, whereupon she was dreadfully distressed. Seeing this, the wicked witch says to her that she has vengeance in her own hand if she wants it, and then she gives her a large pin and a figure like a wax saint, and says to her, 'Wherever you stick this pin into the figure, there the king's daughter will have a pain; only be very careful, for, if you stick it into the heart, she will die.'

"Well, my beloved friends, what did the girl do, as she wanted to put off that marriage, but begin to stick the pin here and there in the figure, and lo and behold at the same time the king's daughter begins to say, 'Oh, I've got a pain here, oh, it hurts me there,' until she had to take to her bed again. The shepherd went almost crazy looking for herbs out in the fields, and could not make out why the relapse had come. And while he was trying to cure her, two months passed by, and then two months more passed by, and the girl in the village seeing that her shepherd did not come, began to get very nervous with her sorrow, and going to prick the figure a little, her hand slipped and the pin touched the heart. At that moment the king's daughter died. And the same day that she was buried, the shepherd was hung in front of the City Hall.

"The news went about, and when the girl heard it, she went to the king's palaces to demand justice against the witch. And the constables went out in all directions, and caught the wicked creature, and burned her up with the wax figure. Thereupon the king, as he had no other daughter than the one who had died, took a great fancy to the afflicted girl who had demanded justice of him. And as he took a fancy to her, he carried her off to his palaces, and afterward married her. So when the girl was queen of the Gentiles, she called all her relations and made them great folks, and to the least of her neighbors she gave forty acres of land and a pair of oxen, and paid their taxes for two years. And as she was a Christian and very

cunning, she converted all the Gentiles after a while, and lived in peace and happiness."

"So then," says Pólito, "all this is about a king who hung his daughter because a shepherd fell in love with a witch who cured him with herbs."

"Just so," he was answered, so as to have done with him.

"The story," observes Gorio Tejares, "is a very good one of its kind, though you will be thinking that the part about a king's daughter falling in love with a common man is hard to swallow. But that's a very ordinary thing, and if the man is a soldier, so much the better. In the lands through which I have travelled, I have had occasion to notice that; and if I had been like other people, tempted by covetousness or vanity, I might have got out of my uniform, I will not say a princess, but anyhow an Infanta—in short, something pretty fine."

After the stories are over, for Tanasio tells several, comes the turn for riddles. These are always propounded by the learned Cencio. This is the kind:

"Riddle me, riddle me, ree, he's sharp who guesses me. Goes on, and goes on, and never gets to Canton."

Uncle Ginojo just dies for riddles. He wakes up a little as he hears the first one, rubs his eyes, and asks,

"What did you say, Cencio?"

"Goes on and goes on, and never gets to Canton?"

"I tell you, that is a sticker! If you had said, stops and stops—why, then, supposing a case—but that about goes on and goes on!"

"Goes on and goes on," repeats Pólito, pounding his head; "what the mischief can it be? An ox!"

"It is not you, stupid ox!" says Cencio.

"Goes on and goes on," hums Gorio—"the Chiclana regiment of light infantry!"

"Wrong!"

"Goes on and goes on," sighs Polido, "it must be—pshaw! I'm so stuffed that I can't see into the thing at all."

"Goes on and goes on," murmurs Tanasio; "oh, if it is not wrong to ask, is it something to eat?"

"No."

"Is it an animal or a man?"

"It is something that moves all by itself, and is a piece of property upon which no local tax can be levied," answers Cencio, with his customary air of importance.

"It stops and stops and yet gets to the town," muttered the forgetful Uncle Ginojo.

"Not at all; it goes on and goes on and never gets to Canton."

"But who knows where Canton is?"

"That's so," says Sabel, "if it were Santander, we should know that better, and it might be——"

"The marketman," suggests Mari-Juana.

"Or the diligence," says Chiscona.

"I said that it is something that moves all by itself, and that a local tax cannot be levied upon it," repeats Cencio.

"Well, I give it up," exclaims Uncle Ginojo.

"So do I—and I—and I," add others.

"But I don't," says Pólito, striking his knees violently with his fist. "How does it begin?"

"With *m*," answers Cencio.

"*M*, *m*, *m*," repeats Uncle Gorio. "If it were *n*, now, supposing a case, why then—but *m*, *m*, that's a sticker."

"Emigrant!" shouts Pólito, as if the difficulty were settled at last.

"I said it began with *m*."

"Well, that's all the same."

"Does emigrant begin with '*m*,' stupid?"

"Well, if it doesn t I'd like to know——"

"Come, I'll make it a little plainer for you; *mi*, *mi*, *mi*——"

"Miller!" two voices cry out.

"You are getting near."

"Mill!" shouts the whole company.

"I declare! Isn't that funny?"

"Well, I am not satisfied," protests Pólito, "for you can get to the mill in four jumps, and you said that it never gets to Canton."

"Heavens! What sort of a mind has that man got! I said, goes on and goes on and never gets to Canton. Doesn't the mill turn and turn the whole day long without stirring from the spot?"

"Yes, that's so."

"Well, now you see how it can never get to Canton, or anywhere else."

"What an easy riddle that is!" growls Uncle Ginojo. "Waking one up for that!"

"Didn't you say it was such a sticker?"

"The way you gave it out, yes."

"Well, if you have got to have it all plain from the beginning, it wouldn't take any skill at all to guess it."

"Oh, don't tell me that! That sort of talk is not worth a pin."

So saying, Uncle Ginojo buries his feet in the warm ashes, and falls a-nodding again.

Two or three other riddles test the wits of the company, though not one is guessed until Cencio gives half the name of the thing in question.

Nor is there lack of badinage and repartee—for example, between Gorio and Sabel when he is holding the spindle so that she can reel off what she has spun.

"You are spinning very coarse yarn, Sabel."

"I'm doing it to suit myself, not you."

"You are bending over too much."

"It isn't because I want you to straighten me up."

"It wouldn't be a bad thing if I did."

"I might give you a knock."

"Don't squeeze the spindle so, you'll break the yarn!"

"It's because it tickles the palm of my hand."

"Your skin must be very tender."

"My heart is more so, for just from the displeasure of some one that I know, it is getting rougher than the leather covering of my old knapsack."

General laughter.

Tribute is also paid to the fashions. A bow of rib-

bon in Sabel's hair, a new gather in the sleeves of Clavellina's waist, which immediately catch Aunt Cimiana's attention, are enough and more than enough to excite the artistic enthusiasm of the rustic *modiste.*

"Well, if you girls nowadays don't beat all! After one has worn one's self out in cutting a dress, there you come out at the end with, this is lacking and the other is wrong, that isn't the style, this must be turned, and the other twisted. Good gracious! That used to be well liked; why, I tell you, a girl's pride and delight was a flannel skirt and a bombazine waist trimmed with corduroy. In two jerks you would cut out the skirt, baste up the breadths, put it under the straw bed, or better under the mattress if the bed had one, sleep on it three or four times, and then you would take it out and it would be a perfect wonder to see how it would hang!"

In like manner, excursions are made into the field of politics, and then Tanasio sets the pitch. As a carter, he is frequently in Santander, where he has two intimate friends in the guise of stevedores, who keep him informed, in their way, in regard to the most important events that they get news of. Besides, while he is in an office waiting for a bill, he doesn't lose a word of what is said, if the conversation is about politics. In this way, with his facts picked up here and there and from such different sources, the inquisitive carter works out the thread of his political discourses, which are the supreme delight of Selmo, Polido, and Gorio.

"Well, what do they say down yonder?" asks the former, taking advantage of a few moments' silence.

"Well, just now, it seems that they are very much stirred up about the wars."

"Whereabouts?" asks Polido.

"It must be abroad somewhere, from what they say."

"And which way is that, if I may ask?"

Here is the place for Cencio to come in.

"Abroad is in the land of France, and also among the Russians and Prussians."

"But what's the trouble?"

"Well, it seems like," Tanasio goes on, "it all comes from a quarrel between kings."

"What about?"

"Oh, about their whims and their fancies, whether this here is mine or isn't, or whether I want that or don't. It seems that the French one has offered to fight, but the other ones don't want to."

"But who are the other ones?"

"Well, the ones in England, on one side, and on the other the revolutionists who want to shut up all the churches."

"The Lord forbid, amen!" exclaim the women, crossing themselves.

"Why, they say that the Holy Pope in Rome had to go out one day and drive away a lot of heretics who were stoning the palace windows."

"And what's all this goings-on likely to cost the poor laboring man?"

"Well, most likely a few more pennies than he has to pay now."

"But won't they be drafting soldiers every month?"

"They think not, because, as far as that goes, as all the troops in Spain now obey the Queen, we have more than enough to fight all the abroad there is in the world. Of course, that's the reason no one on earth dares meddle with us—except those from the land of the Moors, and they got enough of that not long ago."

"I should say they did, Goodness!" bursts out Gorio, who guards as a sacred possession the cross of San Fernando which he won in the battle of Tetuán. "Just imagine——"

Sometimes those who are most fond of cards take a hand at the various games played among peasants. On the evenings of feast-days light refreshments are offered the guests, two quarts of red wine being enough to satisfy the whole company.

With these and other entertainments of the same sort, with sometimes a little song struck up by Silguero at the request of the gathering, the evening passes away, and before eleven each one has gone to his own

house in a state of great peace and contentment, blessing the first one who ever thought of that way of passing such agreeable hours at the firelight reception.

Now then, impartial readers, it seems to me that after what you have seen and heard in Uncle Selmo Lembío's house, you cannot do less than admit that, if serving up literature and music and politics, indulging in quips and gallantry, having something to drink and playing games—that if these are the best ways of spending the long evenings in winter, the spinning-bees of the mountain region have nothing to learn of the *soirées* of "the great world," and nothing to envy them for—unless it be the elegant pen of the Jenkinses who sing their glories in the columns of the aristocratic press.

This amusing and not uninstructive anecdote is taken from a collection of anonymous Spanish tales, and is translated for ROMANCE by Helen Walsworth Lester.

THE PROFESSOR OF SIGNS.

A SPANISH ambassador to Great Britain, a learned man, but taciturn and eccentric, had formed very strange ideas of the importance of the language of actions and of signs. He claimed that these could fill the place of the language of sounds, and that there should be in each university a Professor of Signs. One day this diplomat was complaining to the king of the neglect with which all countries treated the cultivation of this means of communication, and of the absolute lack of professors of this admirable science. The king responded smilingly,

"I have a professor such as you speak of; he is a very able man. He is stationed, however, at the most distant university in my kingdom, about six hundred miles from here, in Aberdeen."

"Though he should be in China," answered the ambassador, "I must see him. I will start this very morning."

He set out, and the king, not wishing to be thought a cheat, sent a messenger to the University of Aberdeen to announce the arrival of the curious traveller, and to charge the professors to receive him with all due ceremony, and to dispose of him as soon as possible.

The ambassador was welcomed with great pomp, but he announced that he wished to see nobody but the Professor of Signs, whom he was awaiting with the greatest impatience. He was told that the professor was absent, having gone to exercise his art among the mountains of Scotland, and that the date of his return was unknown.

"Well, I will await him here," replied the ambassador, "although he should delay for a year."

The professors, seeing that this subterfuge had not produced the desired result, and that they should be forced to entertain His Excellency for a long period, resolved to employ some other means of ridding themselves of him.

There was in the city a one-eyed butcher named Geardi, a good-natured man, fond of a joke, who consented to play the part of Professor of Signs. Having been suitably instructed, he promised to maintain the most profound silence, and not to explain himself save by signs.

The ambassador, being notified that the professor had returned, showed the greatest delight, and at once appointed a day for a conference with him. At the time set, Geardi, dressed in a doctor's gown and adorned with an enormous wig, was introduced to His Excellency, the ambassador, who was expected to explain himself as best he could to the wonderful man who had been presented to him.

The other professors withdrew to the next room and awaited, not without great trepidation, the result of the interview.

The ambassador approached Geardi and lifted one finger; Geardi answered this gesture by lifting two; the ambassador raised three fingers; Geardi clenched his fist and shook it with a menacing air. The ambassador then drew an orange from his pocket and showed it to Geardi, who, in his turn, drew from beneath his robe an enormous loaf.

The ambassador showed himself entirely satisfied, made a profound reverence, and withdrew.

The professors, desirous of knowing how their colleague of the one eye had acquitted himself, questioned His Excellency regarding the interview with the Professor of Signs.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "he is a wonderful man! He is worth all the treasures of the Indies. I began by showing him one finger, to give him to understand that there is but one God; he showed me two, to answer that there were the Father and the Son. I raised three,

to indicate the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, whereupon he showed me the shut fist, to tell me that these three formed but one. Then I showed him an orange, which denoted that the kindness of God not only bestows the necessaries of life, but also the sweet and pleasant things that beautify existence. That marvellous man held forth a piece of bread, in order to say to me that that was the essential thing and preferable to all the demands of luxury and vanity."

The professors, enchanted at the happy termination of the matter, bade the ambassador farewell, and sought Geardi, in order that he might give his version of the interview.

"That ambassador," he said, "is an insolent man. He showed me one finger, to criticise me because I have but one eye; I showed him two fingers, to indicate that my one eye was worth more than his two; then he insulted me by lifting three fingers, meaning that we had but three eyes between us. Irritated by his impudence, I shook my fist under his nose and would have shown him the force of my Scotch muscles, except for the respect I have for you. But his insolence did not stop; he took an orange from his pocket, to tell me that my cold and miserable country produced nothing like it; but I showed him a good Scotch loaf, to make him understand that his oranges did not matter to me. I was going to throw the bread in his face, when he prudently made me a bow and left the room. It was time, because I was getting angry; but I am sorry I did not shake him a little, to punish him for his impudent and offensive gestures."

The irrepressible conflict between the Plain Woman and the Pretty Woman is renewed in this remarkable story by Julia Schayer. The Plain Woman, as usual—but read and see.

MA'AMSELLE FÉLICE.

It was New Year's eve, and Fanny, Blanche, and Rachel were sitting with me around the open fire in the pleasant chamber assigned to me as former governess and present guest.

The house was a quiet country mansion, very quiet now, since the death of the wife and mother a year before. There had been some company to dinner—the old minister and his wife, and their spinster daughter, and only son, a bashful Freshman at home for the holidays—but they had gone long ago. It was between ten and eleven o'clock; the old Squire had retired to his own room, and we had agreed to wait together for the coming of the New Year.

They were all attractive girls—Fanny, the eldest, an acknowledged beauty, as little spoiled as may be; Blanche, a small, clinging creature, who would probably be called pet names by everybody to the end of her days; and Rachel, the youngest—a tall, silent, unformed girl, with the face and voice of a tragedy queen.

We had been talking a good deal, at least the girls had, and had arrived at that point which the most voluble must surely reach at last, where nothing more is to be said. The last topic touched upon had been the suggestiveness of trifles, and considerable wit had been expended in the discussion, but, as I have said, we were now silent.

"Speaking of suggestive trifles," began Rachel suddenly in her deepest tones, "could anything be more suggestive than this?"

She had been occupying herself with some small

articles lying on a table by her side where I had placed them—writing and sewing materials, and various small objects which I was in the habit of carrying about with me—and now held in her hand a richly-chased silver sheath, from which she drew a slender dagger of delicate shape and finish.

"Oh!" exclaimed Fanny, seizing upon it, "if it isn't the very same I used to see in Miss Charles's desk when I was a child! It always excited my envy and curiosity. Ah, how sharp it is! It *has* a dreadfully suggestive look. A queer thing for *you* to be carrying about the world, Miss Charles!" she added laughingly.

"Even an old maid teacher may choose her paper-knife, I suppose," I answered. "But I did not choose this thing. It was brought to me from Venice by a much-travelled friend."

"Venice!" repeated Fanny. "Then it may have a story after all! Oh, take it, Rachel. It breathes of love, and jealousy, and the vendetta! And you look Vengeance herself with it in your hand!"

I looked round upon the three girls. They were no longer children. Fanny was engaged to a young naval officer, Blanche was in the first stages of an affair with the blushing Freshman, and Rachel's very soul was steeped in romance. Should I tell them the dagger's story, the saddest story of my uneventful life? All at once I met Fanny's blue eyes bent eagerly upon me.

"There *is* a story, girls!" she cried, "and Miss Charles is going to tell it to us!"

I nodded my head silently. The girls placed themselves in listening attitudes about me, and I began:

. . . Some years before the outbreak of our Civil War, I was a teacher at Bragdon Hall, a seminary for young ladies in one of the Southern States.

At the close of a wearisome day's work I left my recitation-room fagged out entirely, and eager for the retirement and rest awaiting me in my own room. As the great doors which separated the school-rooms from the main building swung to behind me, the sound of

piano-playing saluted my ears. In an institution containing eighteen pianos in almost incessant use, this was no novelty, but I had not taken a step before I realized that here was something vastly different from the slip-shod performances of school-girls. Nothing less than the magnificent harmonies of the *Sonata Appassionata*, rendered in masterly style, swept out through the open doors of the reception-room, and echoed through the corridors.

I am no musician, as you know. I love music too well to profane it by a mediocre touch, but I have never allowed myself to miss an opportunity for hearing the best, and I stood entranced, wondering what great artist had strayed into our midst. Suddenly it flashed across my mind that the new music-teacher, Mademoiselle Félice Michel, was to arrive that day, and I was obliged to conclude that this must be she.

In the mean time I had unconsciously drawn nearer the open door, and became aware that Dr. Bellamy, the principal of the Seminary, was standing just inside, beckoning me with that portentous forefinger which no one, from his nephew and head teacher, Caryl Fleming, down to the lowest stable hand on the place, ever openly disregarded; therefore, conscious though I was of my negligent appearance, I gave my rumpled hair a touch, and went into the room where the teachers and a few of the older pupils were gathered.

The last tremendous *Crescendo* was reached and the closing chord struck as I entered, and the player wheeled slowly around upon the stool. I experienced a mental shock as I looked at her. A woman of twenty-five years perhaps, small, shabby in dress, and with a dark, foreign, and pitiably ugly face. I use the word "pitiably" with due reflection. There are ugly faces which attract, faces for whose smiles men do mad and desperate things. Hers was not one of these. It made the impression upon me of an oval yellow mask, with singular projecting eyes, and small, pale lips. A blind, lifeless, impassive face, it seemed at that moment, but only for a moment, for as she passed her hand, a long,

delicate, brown hand, slowly over it with a motion like removing a veil, the pallid blankness was gone, and as she rose to receive me, a friendly gleam came into the strange dark eyes, and a smile disclosed small pearly teeth, like a child's.

She looked at me steadily as I uttered my regret that I had heard only the last bars of the sonata, her head on one side like a bird's. I afterward discovered that it was only in this way that she could see any object distinctly, a peculiarity of vision which gave to her manner something at once furtive and piquant. She studied my face a moment, and then, after pressing my fingers impulsively, went back to the piano, and played an *Andante* of Chopin, with a tenderness and power I had never heard equalled; and again that white introspective look, if look it could be called, came over her features.

When she had finished, she came over to me and held out both her hands, taking my own in a tense grasp.

"I see," she said rapidly, in English—"I see you *understand.* Ah, yes, I saw it when you came in. The others," she added with a scornful little shrug, "the others—it is the noise they like!"

She dropped my hands with a light laugh that had for me an inexpressible sadness. In the mean time Caryl Fleming had entered, and now came listlessly forward with his uncle, a slight curiosity visible in his striking face. Fleming more than any man I ever saw resembled that darling of the feminine world, Edwin Booth in his younger days, and I am convinced had formed himself upon that individual in his favorite rôle. Certainly nature had well equipped him for the part of the melancholy Dane, whose looks, and voice, and attitudes he had adopted.

He came up to Ma'amselle Félice, and, after being introduced by his uncle, uttered a few words of admiration for her playing, but his eyes were fixed all the time upon some one in another part of the room.

I noticed that Ma'amselle's eyes followed the same

direction, and I saw a quick gleam blaze up in them as she discovered the person who had absorbed Fleming's attention—an exquisite Southern girl, a Miss Triplett of Georgia, the beauty of the school—a beauty anywhere.

A smile curled Ma'amselle's pale lips, and she swept across the room, like a dethroned princess in her trailing dress of seedy silk, to where Dr. Bellamy stood stroking his smooth chin, and showing his glittering teeth with pleasure.

"I am very tired, sir," she said, so imperiously that every one near her started and began watching Dr. Bellamy's face. "I am very tired. I would like to go to my room."

"Certainly, Ma'amselle, certainly!" he answered, touching the bell promptly. Ma'amselle bowed gracefully, and followed the negro servant who answered the summons, without a look at any one. The few pupils present soon left the room, not, however, before Fleming had secured a word or two with Miss Triplett, and one of her sweet, lazy smiles.

Dr. Bellamy came up to me rubbing his hands together and smiling showily.

"And what do you think of the new music-teacher, Miss Charles?" he asked.

"Mademoiselle Félice is an artist!" I answered impulsively. "It seems strange that such a player should become teacher in a school. It seems a pity!"

I had made an unfortunate remark. Fleming was smiling behind his uncle's back in undisguised delight. Dr. Bellamy, too, continued to smile, but there was a look in his face that was not pleasant, as he said haughtily:

"It is my aim to secure first-class talent for this department of my institution. I owe it to my patrons. And I should say that the position of instructor to young ladies of the first families in the South was far more honorable and agreeable than that of an itinerant pianist. Mademoiselle is to be considered fortunate in having secured the position."

"Uncle Harrington is well pleased with his new acquisition," said Fleming, overtaking me a few moments later in the hall. "A little haughty and self-assuming, it is true, is this unsophisticated young foreigner, but we will soon change all that. Jove!" he went on, mockingly, "I haven't seen my worthy uncle so delighted since he secured *you* at a bargain."

Fleming and I had understood each other from the first; he never wasted his caressing looks and tones, or subtly flattering speeches on me. But I felt my cheeks grow hot at his words, although I scorned to answer him. It was true, I was an ill-paid drudge. A friendless orphan girl, without beauty or talent, cannot make terms. My position among these hot-headed, idle Southern girls was a hard one; but I was glad to earn my bread. It was different with Mademoiselle, I thought. Sensitive, spirited, and gifted as she was, how would she endure the petty rules and humiliating restrictions with which Dr. Bellamy saw fit to surround his teachers? I foresaw trouble; but things adjusted themselves wonderfully well.

Ma'amselle Félice discharged her duties faithfully and efficiently, compelling the respect and even the affection of her pupils by her firm, yet gentle and courteous, manners. She consented, too, to perform for the entertainment of visitors at Dr. Bellamy's request whenever required, and never openly resisted any of the unnecessary restrictions which rendered our existence so much harder and more irritating than was necessary, although I now and then saw her fasten upon our tyrant one of her steadfast, sidelong glances which it was evident he found almost unbearable. But he knew Ma'amselle's value too well to risk an open rupture. Her fame had spread rapidly, and was bringing a steady flow of the rich planters' gold into his coffers.

For some reason Ma'amselle attached herself to me from the first. She came frequently to my room in the evening, as I sat writing or studying, and threw herself without ceremony upon my lounge, where she would

lie silently for a long time, her hands clasped beneath her head, or talking in her vivid, intense way, with many gestures of her slender brown hands.

I found her entertaining and clever, and in time I learned to be fond of her, although by temperament and training we were so widely different. She talked of many things—of France, of music, of books, but most eloquently of Dr. Bellamy. Her detestation of him surpassed her power of expression, even when she relapsed into her mother-tongue. I could only laugh at her furious torrents of indignation, although perhaps I should have been shocked.

"You are a good hater, Félice!" I said once.

"I should be," she said, with a dreary little laugh. "I have had much practice in hating."

It was a late autumn evening, the rain was beating fiercely and the wind sighing drearily through the trees. Such an hour awakens memories and invites to confidences, if one is alone with a trusted friend.

"Tell me, Félice," I said, "something of your childhood, your studies, and yourself."

"Would it interest you?" she asked. "There is nothing wonderful in it—except that I should live at all."

She lay silent a few moments, while the strange, blank look which was always on her face when she was thinking deeply, or playing, blotted out the vivid brightness of her glance, and I quietly waited.

"It will be the story of a forlorn child," she said at last. "A poor, miserable, unloved child. Do you want to hear it?"

I went over to her, and sat on a low seat by her side.

"I was born in Paris," she began presently. "My father was a member of the orchestra of the Comédie Française. He had much talent, but he was a bad man—a monster, a tyrant. My mother was a *première danseuse*—a ballet-dancer, you understand. She died when I was very young. I can only remember that she was very pretty, and very fond of me, and that my father was very cruel to her. She cried a great deal,

and one morning she did not awaken, and the priest came, and I was taken away, and afterward shown a long white figure covered with a sheet and a candle burning at head and feet, and they told me this was my mother. And I remember I was glad that my father could not ill-treat my poor little mamma again.

"Helen!" she cried out, suddenly rising and facing me. "Do you believe in a God?"

I was shocked, and troubled; I did not answer until Félice had repeated her question.

"I do, Félice," I then said. "I do assuredly believe in a God, who is a God of love, and mercy, and justice."

Félice looked at me with a faint smile, half-sad, half-cynical, and sank back upon the cushion.

"It is good," she said quaintly. "And may be it is true; I will hope so. And when I see Him, I hope He will let me ask Him some questions."

She was silent a moment, and then began again.

"I was five years old when my mother died—a frightful little creature I must have been, so thin and black and odd-looking. I suppose that is why my father hated me so. At any rate he continued to beat and starve me worse than before, giving me my poor dead mother's share of blows and curses, I suppose. But one day he came unexpectedly into the garret room where we lived and found me playing upon the piano. It was an old, old instrument with many broken strings, but it was my sole joy, and when he came in I was so happy because I had found out the bass to a song I had learned on the street, that I did not hear him until he cried in a big voice:

"'Sacré! little devil, play that again!'

"'Little devil' was his pet name for me. When he called me that, I knew he was in his best humor. I played the little piece again. My father then took me and sat me upon a table, and looked at me long and hard, while I sat still and trembled. Then he burst into a loud laugh.

"'The little devil!' he kept repeating, 'who would have thought it? She has something in her, after all!

We shall see! We shall see!' He gave me a sou to buy cakes. I did not understand, but I was glad of the sou, for I was always hungry. But now he began to feed me better, and bought me shoes and warm clothing, and did not beat me so much, and he began to teach me music. Helen, you will not believe me, but God, *your* God, knows that what I say is true. I was kept at the piano every day for several hours, tied fast into a chair, with a stool under my feet. When he saw that my eyes were not good, and that I stooped forward to see the notes, he put a strap around my neck and bound it to the back of the chair. He placed a book under each of my arms, and a sou on the back of each hand, and often kept me in this position for a whole hour without change. Sometimes he went away and left me to practise alone, one finger at a time, thump, thump, thump, until it seemed to me that every note I struck was struck upon my brain or my heart. If I let the books or the sous fall, I got a blow on the cheek; if I kept them in place, I could keep one sou for myself.

"This went on for four years. At the end of that time I could do wonders with my fingers, but I knew nothing else. I could scarcely read. I was stunted and old, not at all like other children. One day my father said I should now try to be admitted to the Conservatoire. He explained to me that I must play before a number of great musicians and they would decide if I should be admitted as a pupil. He told Marguerite, the old woman who kept the house where we lived, to dress me at a certain hour. All the time she was braiding my hair, and fastening my little black dress, I was growing sick with dread. I think I felt as people do before going to the scaffold.

"I followed my father to a great building and into a long passage, my legs quaking, my heart sinking. We went into a room where a number of girls were seated, all of them pale and some of them crying, but they all laughed when they saw me. I was so little, and black! My dear father seized me by the arms, and whispered, 'I will wait for you outside. If you fail, I will kill

you!' Soon after, a man came in and took our names, and gave us tickets with numbers upon them. One after another of the girls was called, and after a little came back looking scared and white, and went away.

"Then my turn came. I went into a large room where many men were seated at little tables. At the farther end was a stage, where was a grand piano. I knew what I had to do. I crept down the hall to the stage. I heard exclamations of pity and amusement as I passed along, and as I reached the steps, one kind, noble-looking old man smiled at me, and said softly, 'Courage, little one!'

"I went to the piano, and played without notes a sonata of Beethoven. After the first note I had no fear. It was all easy for me; but when I had finished, some one placed a piece of music in manuscript before me. Then, indeed, I began to tremble, because of my poor eyes. But I played the piece, almost without fault, to the end. When I went down the steps and through the hall, many faces smiled at me, and the same old gentleman whispered softly, 'Bravissima!'

"My father seized my hand at the street-door, and dragged me home without a word. During the following week he scarcely spoke to me, but the way he looked at me froze my blood.

"At last one day there came a large envelope sealed with a great seal. My father turned pale when he saw it, but a moment later turned to me with a fierce smile.

"'*C'est bon!*' he muttered. 'If you had failed, I would have beaten you to death!'

"After this, life was less hard for awhile. Under my new teachers I worked hard and gladly, for they were very kind; and some of the girls were kind, too, though the most of them laughed and jeered at me. Years passed, and I graduated, taking the second prize. I was very happy for some time, for I was praised and noticed, and even my father was good to me in his own way.

"But now he lost his position in the orchestra,

through drunkenness and insubordination, and it fell to me to support him. This was not difficult, for I had pupils, and was often required to play at entertainments. But gradually he grew morose and brutal.

"'You might make your fortune if you were not so ugly!' my dear father would say.

"'Is not Monsieur B—— ugly?' I asked, alluding to a great pianist then causing a sensation in Paris.

"'Ah, bah!' laughed my father; 'he is a man. A man can be as ugly as possible, it makes no difference. But an ugly woman——!'

"I began to understand things now. I sat hours before my little dressing-glass looking at my face, and weeping, for I saw it was hopeless. My eyes, alone, were enough. I had not even *la beauté de diable*," she laughed bitterly. "Even that was wanting.

"I must laugh now to remember how I tried to press these dreadful eyes into their sockets—how I lay night after night with weights bound over them, until I found I was making myself blind, and gave up the struggle. Mon Dieu!" she cried, rising and walking the floor. "I would let myself be carved with a knife and chipped with a chisel, to be made beautiful—if only it were possible!"

"Beauty is a passing thing," I said. "It fades in a little while, but your talents——"

She turned upon me with flaming eyes.

"It fades, yes!" she cried; "but in the mean time one has *lived*, one has been happy, *one has been loved!*"

She threw herself face downward on the lounge again, and we were both silent awhile.

"But tell me," I said at last, "how you happened to come to America."

"There is little to tell," she answered wearily. "My father died, and I came with a family of musicians to New York. I found plenty of drudgery to do, and I played in concerts sometimes, but it was always the same story. I was so ugly! I was tired of hearing and feeling this. I lost heart and ambition, and so answered Dr. Bellamy's advertisement. I knew it was

to be buried alive, but I did not care. To eat, to sleep, is all that life has for me!"

"Félice!" I said impatiently, "it is a positive sin for you to talk so!"

She stopped me with a gesture.

"Hear, my dear!" she said. "Last evening I played for visitors. Mr. Fleming was there. I thought, 'I will try him.' He was standing by me at the piano, and I chose something *for him*, and I played until I saw his heart in his eyes. Then Miss Triplett came in, and sat where he could see her. I saw his eyes fasten upon her, and he could hardly wait for the last note, and when it was struck went immediately over to her."

Again Félice sprang up excitedly.

"Yes," she cried, "I would give all I possess of talent, I would be willing never to hear a note of music, to be, only for one year, as beautiful as that girl is. Do you know, when I am giving her a lesson, I often feel that I would like to strike her in her calm, satisfied, beautiful face! I believe I hate all pretty girls, and her most of all!"

At that moment came the sound of Dr. Bellamy's slippered feet in the passage. It was past the hour when lights were to be extinguished, and he was making his nightly rounds. At my door the steps paused, and there came the warning scratch, scratch, of that portentous forefinger, and a slight significant cough.

"*Tyrant!*" muttered Félice, clinching her small fists, and preparing to depart.

"As you only hate *pretty* girls," I said, as I bade her good-night, "you will try to love me a little, I hope?"

Félice laughed, and patted my cheek.

"You are good and true, and I do love you so much," she answered. She kissed me on either cheek in her pretty French fashion, and slipped away.

What Félice had told me of herself had made clear to me many things in her character that had puzzled and troubled me. She was only a passionate, undisciplined child, yet wonderfully kind and considerate of others, and generous to a fault. Among her pupils

were some dull, ill-favored girls for whom nobody seemed to care, and these Félice singled out for special attention. She had not a particle of the Parisienne's taste in dress, and bought the cheapest and flimsiest things for herself, but spent her money freely upon any one who seemed in need of it. She had no skill with needle or scissors, yet I have often found her pleased as a child over some queer-shaped but comfortable garment she had made with much pains for some poor black child on the place.

Poor Félice! What she had betrayed in her excitement as she spoke of Fleming troubled me a good deal, and every day gave me new cause for fear.

We had organized a literary club for the study of the French classics under Ma'amselle Félice's supervision. She herself read with a purity of accent and power of expression which made our efforts mere travesties, of course, and she possessed one of those beautiful, low-pitched voices which one never tires of listening to. But we were all amazed when one evening she threw aside the volume of Racine from which we had been reading, and rising, began reciting, in the most wonderful, impassioned manner, some passage from *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. I cannot recall the words, but it was where Adrienne is first made to believe in her lover's treachery. We were spell-bound. Fleming, who was half reclining on a low seat in one of his Hamlet attitudes, looked first amused, and then bewildered, and fixed his eloquent eyes upon Félice to the very last word.

"I would not have believed——" he began, as if to himself, then added warmly, "Ma'amselle, that was superb!"

Félice fixed upon him one of her intense side-glances, —a bitter smile came to her face.

"You *would* have said you did not believe it was in me," she said in her quaint, rapid way. "You are right, Mr. Fleming. There is nothing in me. That was mere imitation. I have heard Rachel and other great *artistes* many times."

Fleming colored slightly, but made no attempt to

apologize for his rudeness. I saw, however, that he followed Félice with his eyes for the rest of that evening, and always with that look of wonder, or bewilderment.

After this, under one pretext or another, he began to seek her society. He sang very well, and suddenly discovered that he sang better with Félice's accompaniment. Then he wished to converse in French—always some selfish motive, you perceive; but Félice never seemed to notice that. She seemed incapable of resisting his influence in anything, or of refusing any request he might make, except that, after that one evening, no one, not even Fleming, could persuade her to recite for us again.

A wonderful change began to come over Félice. As she came to me sometimes after a walk or a ride with Fleming, and pressed her cool, soft cheek against mine, I wondered if this smiling girl, with the pink flush on her face, the light in her strange, pathetic eyes, could be the plain, impassive-looking, elderly young woman we had called Ma'amselle Félice. Her very step, and voice, and carriage had altered.

Matters continued so for some weeks. One evening Félice came to my room, and threw herself down at my side, burying her glowing face in my lap. I was sure from her manner that something more than usual had happened.

"Helen!" she said, at last, raising her face and flinging her arms about me. "Helen, I am so happy! If happiness could kill, I should die! Ah, *ma chèrie*, you will not believe it! You cannot! I can scarcely believe it myself, but it is true! My God, it is true! He loves me!"

A sharp pang went through me at her words.

"I suppose you mean Caryl Fleming," I said, with an unresponsiveness she had not expected. She looked at me an instant, then laughed a laugh thrilled through and through with ecstacy.

"Certainly I mean Caryl Fleming," she said.

"Did he tell you so?" I persisted. Félice rose to

her feet, and looked at me with a puzzled, pitying smile.

"Did he tell me so?" she repeated, softly. "In words? No. I believe not. But in a thousand other ways, yes—and to-night, to-night, Helen, he took me in his arms, and kissed me again and again!"

For an American or English girl such frankness would be impossible. In Félice it seemed only natural and fitting. The fervor and naïveté of her manner robbed her speech of all unwomanliness or strangeness; but in my heart of hearts I trembled for Félice.

However, for a time Fleming's devotion seemed absolute. Outside of their recitation-rooms they were always together, riding, walking, or singing.

The brief Southern winter, during which Nature merely turns a cold shoulder upon us for a time, was over, and again she was smiling with all the glow and tenderness of Spring. I kept up my solitary walks and rides, sometimes coming upon Félice and her lover, she looking absorbed and radiant, he languid, and, I fancied at last, more than a trifle bored. Apparently his latest experiment was losing its piquancy. I was not surprised, therefore, when Félice began at last dropping into my room evenings in the old way.

One evening she had been lying for a long time upon the lounge, her eyes fixed upon the ceiling, where the lamp threw a huge shadow like a dark, hovering wing, when I broke the silence myself.

"You do not play for Mr. Fleming this evening?"

"No," she answered. "Mr. Fleming has a cold—and headache—and letters to write." She spoke these words slowly, with long pauses, as if answering some doubt or questioning within herself, rather than my own. I asked no further questions. I would force no confidence.

Fleming withdrew himself more and more. He had no time for music. He was writing for Northern magazines now—he was a clever fellow, with a happy turn for writing—and, like the rest of the teachers, the approaching close of the school-year gave him much

extra work. Indeed, we were all absorbed in additional duties, both teachers and pupils—the former forced to superhuman exertions by Dr. Bellamy's canine watchfulness and persistence, the latter nervous and apprehensive, or sulky and impertinent, as the case might be.

In a word, we were all wrought up to the artificial and unwholesome state common to such crises, and I am afraid that under the stress brought to bear upon me I was even unmindful for a time of the change that was again coming over Félice, or that she had ceased almost entirely to come to my room, even avoiding me, as I at last perceived.

But as I was one day standing in the hall with Fleming, discussing some point concerning the arrangements for the approaching examination, Félice passed by us, her head held very high, her long black dress trailing, her hands clinched against her side. The whiteness of her face struck me.

"Ma'amselle Félice is looking badly," I said to Fleming. "She misses her accustomed rides and walks." Fleming languidly regarded a rose in his button-hole.

"Why does she not ride, or walk, then?" he inquired in the most indifferent of voices.

"She is perhaps waiting for the company of her fiancé," I answered, betraying, I do not doubt, a good deal of heat. Fleming raised his eyes from the rose, and looked at me with an affectation of mild surprise.

"Ah, indeed!" he said, "I was not aware that Ma'amselle was engaged. Who, I beg, may the fortunate man be?"

"You are even more cruel and base than I thought!" I said, turning away indignantly. Fleming laughed softly.

"Why do young women become hysterical on the slightest provocation?" I heard him remark.

I found Félice standing at Dr. Bellamy's door, which was opposite my own, engaged in earnest conversation with that gentleman, both evidently in great excite

ment, although he was smiling his most glittering and unpleasant smile.

"No!" Félice was saying rapidly, with many gestures. "No! Say what you will, I will *not* give her one more lesson!"

"But your reason, Ma'amselle?" I heard Dr. Bellamy say, as I closed my door. "If Miss Triplett has been impertinent——"

"Impertinent!" cried Félice. "No, she would not dare. But I give her no more lessons, *tout le même.* Impertinent! Mon Dieu, her very existence is an impertinence to me—to *me!*" And she swept away contemptuously.

Félice had her way here, and Miss Triplett was excused from her music-lessons for the remainder of the term. This occasioned some gossip among the girls, who spoke unreservedly before me. Perhaps, because I was myself young, and they felt safe with me. There was some girlish chaffing of Miss Triplett, in which Fleming's name was mentioned. She made no retort, but a faint pink crept over her creamy skin, and she kept her long, soft eyes downcast, slowly turning a ring on one of her fine, dimpled fingers. She smiled faintly, too. She had a smile that would have won St. Anthony from his cell.

All through the following days of toil and worry and excitement, Félice avoided me. Often I stole to her door when the house was quiet for the night, and tapped softly, calling her name, but she did not, or would not, hear me.

One warm night along in June, finding it impossible to sleep, I rose and sat by the window. All at once I heard my name whispered softly through the key-hole. It was Félice's voice. I rose and let her in. She wore a long white wrapper, and her hair was all about her shoulders.

"Félice," I said, "you look as if you might be the ghost that haunts the verandas."

"Ghost!" she repeated. "What do you mean?"

"Oh," I laughed, "the servants swear that a ghost

haunts the verandas, and not one of them will budge from the door after nightfall."

Félice stood still a moment, as if in thought.

"That interests me, that ghost," she said presently, with a shrug of her shoulders; "I would like to meet it. Do you know, when I am dead I will be a ghost, too. It must be a great consolation, that." She laughed bitterly under her breath, and began walking about the room. She went to my table, and bent over the flowers upon it.

"Oh, too sweet!" she said. "It is not good for you, my dear; there is poison in too much sweetness."

I noticed that her hand wandered among my papers for a moment, and then went quickly to her bosom. *Afterward* I remembered this.

She came to the window and looked out into the warm, fragrant, starlit darkness.

"It is near the hour for ghosts to walk," she said, after a moment or two; "what if we might see one."

The ignorant gossip of the black servants seemed to have impressed her curiously; she lingered a short time, and then went away. I watched her little figure trailing down the corridor with feelings of pain and uneasiness, and though I went again to bed, I could not sleep. I rose and put the flowers out on the window-ledge, and as I did so I fancied I saw a white figure slip into the darkness of the long veranda that ran along the back building. I dismissed the thought as a nervous fancy, but I simply could not lie down. I opened my door noiselessly—long practice had rendered us all adepts at this—and looked and listened intently. It seemed to me that I could hear a faint sound of opening and closing doors or windows below, and to my wrought-up senses the dark passages seemed full of flitting shapes and airy whispers. I crept along to Félice's door. It was open, and the room was empty. But as I stood there wondering, she came swiftly through the corridor and into her room. She did not start at seeing me, but seized my wrist in her cold fin-

gers, and began laughing softly and hysterically. I touched her dress. It was wet with dew, as was her loose dark hair.

"Where have you been?" I asked hastily.

"I have been ghost-hunting," she said. "It is great fun, *ma chère.*"

"Then it was you I saw on the veranda," I impulsively said. Félice started.

"On the veranda? No, I was not on the veranda. What have you seen?"

"It was nothing, I suppose. I merely fancied I saw something."

"Very good," said Félice. "It is like a play, this night. It is the third act. The *dénouement* will be very fine, that is certain."

She began laughing again. I did not like her voice or her manner, but I left her, after inducing her to go to bed.

The next day was the first of the public exercises which were to close the school-year. The little town was overflowing with guests, and every spare room at the Hall was filled with parents or relatives of the graduating class. I had feared that Félice would be unable to fulfil her arduous duties; but she appeared at breakfast looking no paler than usual, and was if anything rather more voluble and witty.

A few moments before nine o'clock I stood on the veranda surrounded by the girls of my class in their white gala-dresses, waiting for the sound of the organ which was to be the signal for our entrance. Fleming and Dr. Bellamy were already upon the platform, and the seats assigned to the spectators were more than filled. Near me stood Miss Triplett, calm and unconcerned amid her agitated, expectant school-mates. She was dressed in the finest white mull, and her throat and bare arms were wreathed in the feathery foliage and yellow blossoms of the jessamine, which also shone star-like in her soft, dark hair. She held in her hand a huge bouquet of yellow roses. She was the dullest girl in the class, and the least popular, but no one

could have denied that she was one of the most beautiful creatures under the sun.

All at once Félice came along the veranda on her way to the organ. She started at sight of Miss Triplett, and stopping before her looked at her with a strange, uncanny smile. Small, haggard, badly dressed, she was a sorry contrast to that tall and lovely daughter of the South, in her exquisite flower-wreathed attire. I saw a kind of shiver pass through her as she looked, and suddenly she put one of her hands on the proud beauty's spotless arm.

"*Bon jour*, Ma'amselle Triplett!" she said, speaking rapidly in French. "I hope you have slept well! No bad dreams, no phantoms, eh?" She had begun speaking in her suavest tones, but before she finished her voice had a harsh, almost fierce, sound. The girl withdrew her arm haughtily, and answered coldly in the same language.

"Merci, Ma'amselle, I have slept well, and I never dream."

Félice gave a short laugh and passed on. A moment afterward the stirring notes of the "Wedding March" pealed from the organ, and the exercises began.

Three days of incessant excitement and absorbing work followed, and on the third and last evening the house and grounds were thrown open to visitors. When the crowd was greatest, I succeeded in stealing away, with the intention of enjoying the luxury of an hour's rest, when in one of the corridors I met Dr. Bellamy.

"I am looking for Ma'amselle Félice," he said, with evident impatience. "There are strangers who wish to hear her."

"Have you been to her room?" I asked.

"Certainly. She is not there. Perhaps," he added, "she is on the lawn with—with Fleming."

I said I would look for her. It was a relief to find myself in the open air, and I walked about the grounds for some time, meeting many youthful couples—for on this occasion discipline was relaxed, and the young ladies could indulge for once in the privilege of flirta-

tion—but I nowhere saw Félice. In a a remote part of the lawn I came upon Fleming and Miss Triplett. I went directly up to him, and said:

"I am looking for Ma'amselle Félice. Have you, perhaps, seen her?"

"I have not, indeed," he answered, coolly.

I returned to the house and went to Félice's room. She was there, now. She had thrown herself upon her bed. A sorrowful, piteous figure she made in her soiled evening dress of blue silk, wreathed with torn and rumpled artificial roses. The long trail was wet and soiled from contact with the grass of the lawn, her white shoes soaked through and through.

"Félice," I said, "Dr. Bellamy is looking for you." She made no answer. Her face was buried upon her arms.

"Come," I said, trying to raise her. "You must not give way to this. Where is your pride, Félice? Will you let that man see your misery? He is unworthy of your love—wholly unworthy."

Still no answer.

Dr. Bellamy came to the door, but I sent him away. Then I removed Félice's tawdry evening dress, and prepared her for retiring. She gave herself into my hands without resistance or appeal, like a tired child. Poor Félice—how wasted were her slender limbs, how cold and trembling her small, child-like hands. I went to my room for my dressing-gown, and came back to her, for I dared not leave her alone. I turned the gas very low and lay down by her side, and there we lay, while the laughter and music came up to us from below. Félice lay as if asleep, or dead, except once when Fleming's voice, singing "*O ma charmante*," came floating up alone, so sweet, so tender, so impassioned. Then a long shuddering breath escaped her, and her cold fingers closed tightly upon my hand.

At last we heard the guests departing. Carriage after carriage rolled away. The inmates of the Hall dispersed to their rooms with much talk and laughter. Doors and windows were closed, and silence fell. After

an interval, Dr. Bellamy's slippered tread was heard, and then followed perfect silence.

Worn out physically and mentally, I fell into a deep sleep from which I started all at once with a sudden sharp sense of fear. I turned to Félice. She was not beside me, nor in the room. I rose and went out into the hall, and listened intently. I was sure at last that I heard a slight rasping sound from below. I groped my way through the hall to the stairs and down them, into the abysmal darkness of the lower passages. At the foot of the stairs I listened again, and this time I heard a faint sound from the direction of one of the recitation-rooms. This room was for Fleming's exclusive use. It was situated directly opposite his apartments, and gave also upon the veranda. Toward this room I made my way, with no other object than to find Félice and save her from some evil—I did not know what.

I reached the door, and pushed it gently. It opened without noise. At the same instant there came the sound of a match struck against the wall, and in the brief illumination which followed I distinctly saw three figures—that of Fleming, holding in his arms a tall, girlish figure in a white dress, and that of Félice, wrapped in a long black cloak, advancing swiftly toward them. Then came utter darkness again; a swift rush, a succession of piercing screams, a struggle, a wild laugh, a fall, and Fleming's voice calling for help. I must have answered him, for the next moment he said:

"Is that you, Miss Charles? For God's sake bring a light—something terrible has happened!"

But there was no need. Already steps and voices were in the hall, and Dr. Bellamy appeared upon the threshold with a candle in his hand.

"What in Heaven's name——" he began, but stopped suddenly, stricken with amazement, horror, and anger. Miss Triplett lay in his nephew's arms insensible, with blood flowing over her white gown. Fleming was bending over her uttering wild words of

tenderness. In a dark corner crouched Félice, gesticulating and muttering incoherently.

"What does this mean, Caryl?" cried his uncle, but Fleming paid no attention. He carried the insensible girl across into his own room, and laid her upon a couch.

"Let some one go for a doctor, quick!" he said to the group of teachers, pupils, and guests which had gathered about the door. The girl's mother had already appeared, and was moaning and wringing her hands helplessly, while Fleming had turned back the loose sleeve and bound his handkerchief over the wounded arm.

I alone went to Félice, still cowering and muttering in the corner, and I saw that her fingers still clasped a small dagger which I recognized as mine. She made no resistance as I attempted to raise her, but as I led her out into the hall, and Fleming, bending over the still motionless form of Miss Triplett, became visible, she uttered a cry more dreadful than any sound I ever heard, and fell to the floor as if dead.

What followed I recall only as something I have dreamed or read of. I remember seeing Félice carried up to her room, and that some one brought me to my own, and laid me upon my bed. The next day I was required to tell what I had witnessed. I was not allowed to see Félice at first, but as I begged so urgently, Dr. Bellamy took me himself to her room. I found her in charge of two strong black women, and two or three physicians were present. Félice sat upon the side of her bed, her hands bound together, her slender fingers twining and untwining themselves with a terrible restlessness. Her face was utterly colorless, and rigid, and blank—a death-mask. I spoke to her, but she would not notice me. She continued to mutter to herself in her own tongue. I caught some words I had heard her repeat so often—

"Quand on a tout perdu,
Quand on n'a plus d'espoir,
Tout perdu—plus d'espoir."

Félice was hopelessly mad. . . .

There was silence in my room. Blanche's face was hidden in my lap, and I think she was sobbing a little. Rachel sat gazing at the fire, her heavy brows drawn together, her mouth sternly set, and looking altogether like a girlish Nemesis with the little dagger gleaming amid the folds of her dark dress. Fanny, however, sat calmly stroking her bronze-brown hair, whose splendid length she had drawn forward over her arm, and was holding out to catch the fire-light.

"Well?" she said at last.

"Well!" I repeated.

"Aren't you going to tell us the rest?"

"Isn't that enough?"

"Enough!" said Fanny with indignation. "We want to know what became of that horrid girl."

"And Fleming!" said Rachel, in a fierce undertone.

"And Félice," added Blanche in a smothered voice.

"The 'horrid girl' was only slightly wounded. She went home with her mother the same day. But why do you call her horrid? She could not help being beautiful and fascinating, you know."

"I hate her all the same," said Fanny. "Go on, there's a dear."

"Fleming followed her soon, and they were married in a short time. He became professor in a Southern college, and later was an officer in the Confederate Army, and was, I believe, killed in battle. Félice never recovered. I went to see her years afterward at the asylum to which she was carried. She was sitting upon the edge of her bed, weaving her fingers in and out and muttering to herself incessantly. Her hair was quite white, and her face had the same dead, blank look. She showed no sign of recognition, and I had to leave her as I found her."

Again there was silence in the room. All at once the clock began striking the midnight hour. The old year was dead. One by one the girls rose and bade me "Good-night and a Happy New Year," and I was left alone by my dying fire.

No one should strive too hard to penetrate the motive of the chivalric and disinterested hero of the following adventure, until the end is reached. It is by Gustavo Becquer, and is translated for ROMANCE by Mehitabel Quincy.

THE SET OF EMERALDS.

WE were standing in the Carrera de San Geronimo, and were reading the title of one of Méry's books at Duran's. As my attention was attracted by the singular title, and I mentioned it to my friend, he replied, as he leaned lightly on my arm:

"It is a beautiful day, so let us take a turn around the Fuen Castellana, and I will tell you a story in which I enact the chief part. After you have heard it, you will have no difficulty in understanding the title, but will consider it the most natural thing in the world."

I had plenty to do, but as I am always glad of some excuse for idleness, I accepted his proposal, and he went on as follows:

"Some time ago, as I was roaming aimlessly around the city one evening, I stopped before Samper's showcase. I had examined all the collections of photographs and stamps in different shops, and had chosen in my mind the bronzes with which I would adorn my dwelling, if I should ever have one.

"I had been there some time and had amused myself by conferring, in my imagination, this or that jewel on some handsome woman I knew, when I found myself unable to decide who might be worthy of a magnificent set of emeralds, as costly as elegant, which especially attracted my attention among the others by the beauty and clearness of its stones. Just at that moment, I heard a soft, sweet voice which aroused me from my reverie as it said: 'How beautiful those emeralds are!'

"I turned my head in the direction of the voice. It must, I thought, belong to a beautiful woman. I was not disappointed, for she was charming. Although I

saw her for only a short time, her beauty made a profound impression on me.

"There was a carriage standing at the door of the jewelry establishment. The fair one was accompanied by an elderly lady, who seemed to be her mother. They both entered the carriage and drove off, while I was left stupidly gazing after them until they were lost to sight.

"'How beautiful those emeralds are!' she had exclaimed. Did she long for them? and if so, why, I asked myself, does she not get them? She must be wealthy, for she has a stylish equipage, and I believe I saw a crest of nobility on the carriage-door. Undoubtedly there is some mystery in this woman's life. Such were the thoughts that occupied my mind until she was lost to sight. And although her life seemed so enviable, so peaceful, I was quite sure that there was some mystery there. I shall not tell you how, but I finally became acquainted with it.

"She had been married at an early age to a dissipated man who, after squandering his own fortune, had sought for other means in a brilliant match. His bride proved to be an exemplary wife and mother, and sacrificed everything in order to save some of her estate for her daughter, and to retain the place in society which belonged to her by right, though her wicked husband had deserted her and fled to a foreign country.

"People talk of women's great sacrifices, but I believe that there are none, in view of their peculiar organization, comparable to the sacrifice they make of an ardent desire in which vanity and coquetry have a share. From the time I became aware of the secret of this woman's existence, through the eccentricity of my disposition, my chief desire was to obtain that set of emeralds and give it to her, in such a way that she could neither refuse it nor know whence it came.

"Among the many difficulties before me in accomplishing this ambition was the fact that I lacked funds. But I did not give up my idea. 'How shall I get the money?' I said to myself, and I thought of the

marvels of the Arabian Nights, of those magical words, to the sound of which the earth gaped open and displayed its hidden treasures; of the magic wands that were so wonderful that when one touched a rock a stream would issue from it, not of water, but of rubies, topazes, pearls, and diamonds.

"Finally I resolved to write a book and sell it. To draw money from a stony editor was a hard task, but I succeeded. I wrote an original work which did not please the popular fancy, for only one person could understand it, and it was an enigma to all the rest. I called the book 'The Set of Emeralds,' and signed only my initials to it.

"As I am no Victor Hugo, but only a simple writer, I assure you that I did not reap as much money as the author of 'Notre Dame de Paris' obtained for his last work. However, I had enough to begin to carry out my plan. The set of emeralds was valued at fourteen thousand dollars, and as I had only about six thousand, I had recourse to the lottery. By good luck, I won all that I needed.

"On the following day I went to Samper's. But as I threw on the counter the roll of bills which might have paid for a pleasure-trip through Italy, and afforded me a life of enjoyment for some years at least, I hesitated, you will say. No, indeed. I cast them down with the ease, the same satisfaction, that Buckingham experienced when he broke a string of costly pearls and scattered them at his lady-love's feet.

"I bought the gems and took them home with me. You cannot imagine anything more beautiful than those jewels. I do not wonder that women heave a sigh as they look at the dazzling display in shop windows, or that Mephistopheles chose a pearl necklace in order to tempt Marguerite. Although I am a man, I would have liked to live in the East and be one of those fabulous monarchs who encircle their forms with gold and precious stones, so that I might have adorned myself with those sparkling gems.

"As soon as I had purchased the gems, I began to

think how I should send them to her. At the end of a few days, thanks to the money I had left, I succeeded in bribing one of her maids to place them among her jewels without her knowledge, and I bribed her to silence by giving her a thousand reals, and making her promise to go off to Barcelona as soon as she had fulfilled her task—and she did so.

"You can imagine the surprise of this woman whom I adored from afar when, suspecting that her maid had stolen from her, on account of her hasty flight, she found those magnificent jewels in her desk. 'Who could have divined my desire?' she cried. Who, indeed, could have suspected that she still thought of those gems with a faint sigh of regret?

"Time passed on. I knew that she had kept my gift, and that she had endeavored to discover whence it had come, but she never wore them. Did she despise my offering? Ah, I reflected, if she only knew the sacrifice it had cost me! If she knew that I was almost equal to that lover who pawned his winter overcoat to buy a bouquet of flowers for his lady-love! Does she think that it has been sent by some high-born love, who will present himself some day to claim his reward? What a mistake she has made! Even though she were free to love another than her odious husband, I was much too far below her in station to think of claiming her hand!

"One evening, when she attended a ball, I stood outside of the palace, to watch for her, and I saw her as she alighted from her carriage, radiant with beauty, while a murmur of admiration burst from the crowd as she passed by. The women gazed at her with envious eyes, the men admiringly, while an involuntary cry of astonishment burst from my lips. She had on my emerald necklace. That night I went to bed without any supper, for I was so agitated I could not eat, but I felt happy. During my sleep I imagined that I could hear the music from the ball, and see her pass before me, and I dreamed that I danced with her.

"The affair of the emeralds had leaked out, and was

the theme of conversation among some high-born ladies. After they had seen the stones there was no doubt that the occurrence had taken place, and the idle gossips began to comment upon it. My idol enjoyed an unblemished reputation. In spite of her husband's dissipation and his indifference toward her, calumny had never been able to attack her; but now the *venticillo* Don Basilio sings of in the opera began to make itself audible. One day, while I was chatting with a number of young men, they spoke of the emeralds, and a simpleton finally made a sneering remark about the woman.

"The idiot's words aroused my ire, especially because the rest agreed to them. But I restrained myself. What right had I to defend that woman? But before a quarter of an hour had elapsed I found occasion to pick a quarrel with him, and I contradicted him so flatly, and was so aggressive, that a duel was the upshot of the affair.

"My friends were astonished that I had sought a duel for such a simple cause, as well as that I would not listen to any explanation. I fought, but I cannot say whether successfully or not, for though I saw my opponent fall, yet I felt at the same moment that my own eyes were dazed. My ears buzzed, and I also fell, dangerously wounded in the breast. They carried me to my humble dwelling, where I was seized with a raging fever. I do not know all the time I spent in bed, calling wildly for her. I should have had fortitude to suffer all my life, just to obtain a grateful look from her, on the brink of the grave.

"But it was sad to die without a single word from her. These thoughts troubled my brain, and one night, while I was tossing restlessly about on my couch, burning up with fever, the portières were drawn back, and I saw a woman standing at the threshold. I thought I was dreaming, but no, for she drew near my bed, where I was tossing about in distress, and as she raised her vail, I saw a tear gleaming on her cheek. It was she!

"I raised myself up with staring eyes, and—just at

that moment arrived at Duran's jewelry establishment."

"What do you mean?" I interrupted, as my friend diverged in this manner from his story. "Were you not wounded, and lying on your back in bed?"

"In bed! What nonsense! I had forgotten to tell you that this was what I had been imagining from Samper's, where I really saw the set of emeralds, and heard the exclamation I have told you of, to the Carrera of San Geronimo, where a porter jostled against me, and aroused me from my reverie, as I was gazing in Duran's shop windows at a book by Méry with the title: 'The History of What Has Never Happened.' Do you understand it now?"

As I heard the *dénoûement*, I could not help laughing. In fact, I do not know what Méry's work refers to, but I am sure that many books might be written under that title.

The reader will recognize the motive of this passionate little tale as that most frequently employed by European writers, especially by those of the South. One is led to wonder whether the women of Italy, France, and Spain are really less true than those of the North. "Susana" has been translated from the Spanish of Gonzales Micros for ROMANCE by Helen Walsworth Lester.

SUSANA.

THERE was an indescribable tumult; cabs and express-wagons crowded the muddy street; the *cargadores* were running with bundles on their shoulders; the newsboys were shouting with discordant voices. What animation! How brilliant the electric light! Everything denoted hurry and work, even the hiss of escaping steam from the engine about to move.

How tedious! An interminable hour before the train would arrive. Tired of walking, I leaned against a post and by the bluish rays of the electric light read, for the twentieth time, this paragraph of a letter:

"I shall arrive Thursday; come to the station to meet me. It is possible that my cousin Susana may come with me, to spend the sixteenth of September.

"I am anxious to see you.

"Your friend,

"MIGUEL."

Miguel! My friend, my confidant, my brother! Ah, the sweetness of friendship!

To pass away the time, I walked away from the station toward the fields. I seated myself on a pile of ties and, with my chin resting on my hand, pensively watched the darkening landscape. The grove was a blur. I do not know what there was in the straight outlines of the distant houses, in the watchman's lantern, shining in the shadow like a red eye, or in the distant glimmer of a lighted window almost lost to sight, that should depress and sadden me. What

frightful shapes the clouds seemed to take, heaped in their immensity, outlined in sinister forms by the lightning, advancing like a sombre army of monsters, the monsters of the tempest! Not one pale star! The wind, the cold, the darkness, memory, perhaps presentiment, something, inspired me with an unspeakable, bitter sadness on that cold, wintry night.

The past! My native land! Behind those silhouetted mountains, still beyond the valley, far away, were my people; that is to say: childhood, youth, family, my heart, Susana! On thinking of her the sad thoughts fled—the sadness, heavy, overwhelming, threatening as those storm-clouds, gave place to the rosy tints of hope.

Again I seemed to see blue mountains flooded with sunlight, their peaks encircled by a violet haze, the morning mist floating in the valley; the billowy maize-field; the grove, thick and dark, beside the road; the white cottages in the distant landscape. My people! My Susana! She, the only one who ever distracted my attention during mass; she who sang with me in the moonlight on the balcony; she who hung on my arm during our walks; she who made me love to think of the future!

The pencil of memory was drawing with indelible lines two pictures which I can never forget: my first and my last interview with her alone.

The first meeting was when the twilight was fading, the country was asleep, the *milpas* undulating like the sea, the *pueblo* quiet, until the frogs in the neighboring marshes began to intone their monotonous and melancholy serenade.

Trembling at every sound, I was waiting behind a *maguey* for the promised signal! I started at the rustling of a withered leaf blown by the wind.

When I saw a light, I was to approach it, imitate the whistle of a bird, wait till I heard a slight cough and then——. The mud-walls of the abode remained dark, and I was afraid. Of the solitude? Of the night? No; of the señorita's father. (Those señores are always brutal and unfeeling.)

Comfort! A light shines, and I approach, tremulous and cowardly. My mouth is dry, and I can scarcely whistle.

"Juan?"

"Susana!"

"Come up, carefully."

My energies fail me. I have fallen twice; but at last here I am, with my pantaloons torn and muddy, astride the adobe wall.

"Do not move."

"No, I am coming down. Tie Corzo so that he will not bite me."

"He knows you already. Take him, Corzo! You see, he wags his tail."

"My darling, here I am. Where are you going?"

"Here—this way, to the arbor. No one is there—come."

Moving softly on tiptoe, holding aside her starched skirt of percale, that it might not rustle, she preceded me to the arbor, and we sat down there, side by side. She shuddered a little, and finally said:

"I am afraid of the darkness."

"Afraid, with me, who love you?"

"*Chist*, do not let the *criados* hear you; they are in the kitchen. Listen," she added in a lower voice, "I have made you come, solely to tell you that it is worse than useless for this to go on any farther. I am older than you are; when you are a man, I shall be an old woman."

"How old? Not more than——" and, taking her in my arms, I added, "Old or young, you will be my Susana; I shall love you always, always."

"Yes, you say so now; but by-and-by——"

We were silent. Under such circumstances, little is spoken. At length she sighed and said: "Do you swear that you love me?"

"Yes, I swear it to you."

"No, no, it is not fitting. Forget me. It is best. Are you angry?"

"No," I answered ironically.

"Are you angry," she cried passionately, "when I adore you?"

"My Su——"

"Hark! I heard a noise! Go!"

Fear seized upon her and upon me also. I felt my valor ooze from my finger-tips.

"They are not coming. The *mozo* is a tell-tale, and is capable of spying on us, in order to tell papa."

I was cold; I fancied I saw a man in every shadow.

"Susana!" cried a voice from a door opening into the courtyard.

"Mamma!" she answered and, in a hasty undertone, added, "Quick! Hide yourself! There," she said, pushing me, "stay behind that——"

"What are you doing?"

"I am busy."

"It is dangerous for you to be out in the dew. What a child you are!"

I, dazed with fear, crouched in a corner, and was on the point of fainting, when I felt a dark object moving beside me. My heart stopped beating, for I thought it was the *mozo*; but it proved to be a pig.

"What do you wish, mamma? Will you bring me a light? My candle has gone out."

The señora brought a light and both turned in at the door; but as they did so, the daughter said to her mother: "Wait a moment. I forgot my handkerchief."

Approaching my corner, she murmured, "My life, good-night."

The last time that I saw her I had no fear. That was a mute scene. She threw herself sobbing on my neck. She wished to look at me till the last instant, and her great dark eyes, ardent and humid, and full of inconsolable sadness, were fixed on my face.

I never since have cried as I did then. She blessed me, hung amulets about my neck, and pressed her lips to mine in one long, intense kiss. She gave me her icy hand for the last time, and sobbed in uncontrollable grief: "Go."

I climbed slowly over the wall.

"Adios, my love, my life. Until my return, farewell," I sobbed, wild with grief.

My friend Miguel was awaiting me.

"You know all," I said to him. "Make this parting easier for her; give her my letters; send me hers."

He tried to console me. He took my arm and spoke such words as are inspired by sincere friendship. How rare it is to find a being so disinterested, so loyal! He promised to join me after a few months. He would tell me of her. What a comfort! I should have one of her relatives with me.

At last! The shrill whistle of the locomotive rent the air, and I listened to it with the most intense anxiety. There comes the train! It is a blot of light, a star in the darkness of the grove. It grows larger; it comes nearer; now the great head-light projects a cone of red into the shadows; it illumines the steel of the rails; gigantic, powerful, puffing, it rushes into the station.

The people are crowding forward; arms are opened to receive the dear and dusty travelers; trunks are hurled about; one hears laughter, sobs, and kisses. And she? In vain I search for her profile among the women who are passing. She is not among them.

"Juanote!" cries a manly voice, and robust arms hug me to suffocation.

"Miguelito! How large you are! And did——?"

"She did not come; aunt is sick; the family expect you to visit them in your vacations. Julia sends you this basket of fruit; Uncle Andres, these guavas, and Pepe this jelly. Where is my valise?"

"Cochero, take these bags! Step in, Miguel. Number nine, Peredo!"

I had wept. The coming of my friend, the messages sent by his family, even the dust of his clothes, brought to my mind more than one recollection of my country, of that distant home—a perfume of those flowers of passion, the only ones on the altar of my heart, all my hopes, my idyl.

"And Susana—tell me about her. Why does she not write to me? Does she love me? Is she forgetting me?"

Never shall I forget the pallor of cowardice that covered Miguel's face, nor that glance that wounded me like the dart of an asp, that tone of cringing supplication, that feigned repentance, that gesture with which he brought forth his letter-case, like the gesture of an assassin who seeks his weapon.

"Kill me, brother!" he exclaimed. "She is my betrothed!"

He threw upon the table a portrait and some letters.

Yes, that was her picture, identical with the one which I had; that was her handwriting, her signature, and even those phrases of hers, which I knew by heart —"If you do not love me, tell me so; I will die dreaming that you love me; my heart is yours till death."

How could I pronounce that, "I congratulate you?" What power enabled me to listen smilingly to the details of his love which he related with tranquil voice, while my soul was flooded with thoughts of evil, of tragedy, of crime? How was I able to dominate my fiery passion and declare that I no longer loved her?

When he left me, I said pleasantly, "Come again, in the morning."

I threw myself on the bed without undressing, and buried my head in the pillows; I longed for darkness, for silence. Gloomy as a funeral cortége, all my memories of the past filed before me.

A belief in friendship had been killed in my soul; a love that could never be replaced had died in my heart.

For this reason I am saddened when, in the night, I hear the whistle of trains going or coming.

But it has all passed. A fugitive bird, I found a nest, loved in it; and, far from the scene of those events, I am forgetting them.

Friendship is sweet for some; but sad for others.

After the embrace, the treachery! After the kiss, the sting!

Whence could he have come? Whither did he go? What was the secret of his mysterious power? Barton Allen has told us something of him, in the sketch given below, and it is to the author alone that we can appeal for a sequel to this marvelous story.

A WIZARD OF THE SIERRAS.

It was in California that I first met Stregone. I saw him but three times in all, and found it impossible to make any progress in his confidence. Confidence? He had none, save in himself. Stregone's confidence in his own power, whether that power were natural or supernatural—and I have never been able to settle the point absolutely in my own mind—was not that of petty vanity. It was sublime and masterly. He stood alone, surrounded by an impassable wall of reserve, cool as an ice barrier, and as polished. Even the name by which he was known was manifestly an assumed one, although it was accepted in that rough Western region without demur.

A New Englander by birth, I found myself at thirty living alone in a rude cabin among the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. I owned some land there and had come up to verify the surveys before making arrangements for irrigating it. A number of miles from the town as I was, the snow-covered peaks were my neighbors, and the smoke of the far-off Indian encampments my human companionship. My surprise may therefore be guessed when, as I sat one evening reading within the door of my hut, a shadow fell between me and the setting sun, and, raising my eyes, I discovered it to be that of a man. I had scarcely time to wonder at the sight of a gentleman in black broadcloth and immaculate linen at large among the foothills at that hour, before he apologized, with a polite removal of his silk hat, for interrupting my studies, and begged me to have the kindness to direct him to the town by the shortest road.

There was no trace of foreign accent in his soft and peculiarly distinct tones, but I set him down on the instant as an Italian—which is probably the only thing concerning him in which I ever came anywhere near guessing the truth. Concealing my astonishment, I assured him that the town was fully twenty miles away, and the road, which I indicated, rough, and that he would certainly be overtaken by night before half the distance should be accomplished. I added:

"The best thing you can do will be to accept my hospitality for the night. Your horse as well as yourself must be tired, and it will give me pleasure to have even one night's companionhip in my solitude. My shelter and food are of the roughest, but, such as they are, you are welcome to share them."

"I thank you," he said at once; "I accept your offer gladly." And he entered the hut.

"Your horse," I hinted.

"My horse? Pardon me; I have no horse with me," said he in so final a tone that I could find no plausible excuse for asking him how he got twenty miles away from civilization without a horse, and yet looked as fresh as if he had just stepped out of a bandbox.

During the process of cooking and eating our simple supper, in the preparation of which I at once engaged myself, I examined my visitor closely. His age might have been anywhere between twenty and fifty. His face was smooth and unwrinkled, but there was an incipient baldness about the crown of his well-shaped head, although his black hair had no touch of gray. For the rest, his general appearance was of the Mephistophelian cast affected by prestidigitateurs. He was slim and tall, and wore a small pointed beard and a moustache, the straight waxed ends of which ran upward. His air of dignified courtesy sat as easily on him as his black clothes, and he betrayed neither curiosity nor surprise at any of the arrangements of my primitive dwelling.

After supper we drew up before the blazing fire, I with my pipe and he with innumerable cigarettes that

he rolled as he smoked. He talked well on subjects of general interest for a long time, and I had an impression that I was listening attentively until the fact dawned upon me, to my great surprise, that the conversation had lapsed into my hands and that I was enlarging to this stranger upon various plans and anxieties as freely as if he was my brother. I came to an awkward stop.

"You were saying," he said, in his soft, distinct voice, "that one hardship of your solitary life here is the long distance you have to go for water?"

The smoke from the cigarette in his fingers floated up between me and his dark, politely attentive features, in curiously complicated curls and rings, which interlinked and twisted for a long time without fading.

"Yes," I returned, laconically, determined to speak as little as possible if I could not open my lips without letting out a gush of personal confidences.

"Why do you not use the water of the spring near the corner of your cabin?" he inquired. "Is it unfit to drink?"

"There is no spring there," I said.

"Surely I cannot have been mistaken," he replied. "There is water by the small heap of stones a dozen yards from your door, is there not?"

"There is no spring within half a mile."

"As the distance is so short, suppose we step out, that I may see how I happened to make so absurd a mistake," said my guest, rising and going to the door.

Wondering at his persistence, I took a blazing pine knot from the fire and followed him into the open air. The night was dark, being moonless, and the torch sent odd flickers of light and shade over his figure as he led the way to a heap of rocks, one of the many that cropped out of the thirsty soil thereabout. Pausing before it, he said:

"This is the spring of which I spoke."

"There is no water there," I replied.

The pine knot cast a dull glow on the boulders and on my guest, as he laid his white hand on one of the

largest rocks. With no apparent effort, he sent it toppling over, and from the middle of the cavity it had occupied there glittered out into the torchlight a thin thread of limpid water, that increased in volume as I looked at it, and trickled away to find a course for itself in the sparse grass. He stooped, caught some in his palm and drank.

"It seems to be good," he remarked.

It was delicious; icy cold and pure as crystal. My astonishment was unbounded that I had overlooked this treasure at my very door, which a stranger had seen at first glance. My visitor, by thus enlightening my ignorance, had repaid my hospitality a thousandfold, and as we returned to the hut, I thanked him warmly.

"It is nothing," he said, dismissing the subject with a wave of his hand. "Let us speak no more of it." So the topic was perforce dropped and we resumed our places before the fire, and I think we talked again.

I say I think we talked. I am not sure, because I must have fallen asleep in a singularly sudden and unexpected manner. I distinctly remember seeing my guest's face turned toward me, veiled in the phantom arabesques of his cigarette's smoke. The next moment, as it seemed, it was broad daylight and I was sitting before the ashes, shivering in the keen morning breath of the mountains that blew down into my hut. My companion was gone, but when he went I can only conjecture; probably when the first light of dawn made the way visible. At first waking I thought his visit must have been a dream, but the cigarette ends showed me that it was a fact, and moreover, when I went out of doors the new spring was running merrily; and it runs, so far as I know, to this day.

* * * * * * * * * *

The next time I saw this remarkable man I was in a small mining town several hundred miles from the scene of our first meeting, where I was detained by engineering business. The only "hotel" in the place was also the principal grog shop and gambling establishment, and rows were of frequent occurrence. I was

sitting in the barroom one Sunday evening, tying to read a stale newspaper by the light of the ill-smelling lamp, when I heard, above the hubbub of the gambling, swearing and drinking, a soft, well-bred voice that I instantly recognized, although I had not heard it for two years. He was inquiring of the man behind the bar if he could obtain accommodation for the night.

He stood there, looking identically as when I had last seen him in the wild foothills, his broadcloth as black, his linen as white, himself as imperturbable and Mephistophelian as ever, while the landlord said that the house was full.

The stranger, with a courteous good-night, turned to leave the room, when he was accosted by a man who started up before the door. This fellow, who was called Sludge, was recognized as a desperate character even there, where the moral sense was nearly stone-blind. He had been gambling with his companions and had had bad luck, which had put him in an ugly temper.

"What's your name, tenderfoot?" he growled.

"My name," replied the stranger, pausing, "is Stregone."

"Well, Mister Stregone," said Sludge, "you ain't goin' quite yet. You're agoin' to set down and have a little game o' cards first."

"I do not care about playing, I thank you," responded Stregone, leaning easily against the bar and waiting for Sludge to get out of the door. His left elbow rested on the counter and his left hand carelessly held his glossy hat by the brim. I saw the name of a well-known London maker in the crown, I was so near him.

"But I care, damn you; and so you're bound to care, you see," announced Sludge. "D'ye see this?" and he exhibited a clumsy six-shooter; "I make porous plasters out of fellers that don't care."

Stregone looked at him pleasantly and did not stir. "Where are the cards?" he asked.

Sludge pointed to a greasy pile on the table. Something in the stranger's self-possessed manner cowed him a little.

"Ah, yes. May I trouble you for a few moments?" looking at me for the first time, with a bow of recognition.

I took up the cards mechanically, while the roomful of roughs, who had suspended private business, looked on.

"Before I play cards with this gentleman," turning toward Sludge, "perhaps he would like to have a little shooting," explained Stregone blandly. "I notice that no one is sitting behind the gentleman who holds the cards. If he will pull out a card and toss it edgewise in the air, it can be used as a target without endangering human life. The back of the card toward the company, if you please," he added to me.

I spun a card in the air as he directed. As it left my hand, "Will you shoot first?" he asked Sludge, politely.

"I don't want to shoot," Sludge grumbled uneasily.

"Pardon me. I was under the impression that you suggested it. Now if the gentleman will kindly toss up another card."

He stood, as he had from the first, with his hat still dangling from his left hand. As I tossed the card, he carelessly reached into the crown of his hat with his right hand and drew out a six-shooter like Sludge's. A shot rang through the close room and the card fell on its face on the floor, pierced through the centre.

"The nine of hearts," said he.

One of the gaping crowd slowly picked up the card and turned the face toward the company. It was the nine of hearts. The marksman nodded, and I sent another spinning vertically up. He shot again.

"The knave of clubs," he said.

It fell back upward and shot through the middle, as before, and was again found to be the card he announced. After this had occurred half a dozen times, he said: "That will do. Now, since the gentleman is so urgent, I will play a game with him." He put the six-shooter back in his hat as he spoke. When he passed me a moment later, his hat was still dangling from his left hand, empty.

It soon became evident that Sludge was booked to lose that night, while the stranger had phenomenal luck. It is due him to say that he won fairly and by no mysterious means. They gambled with gold pieces, and Sludge cursed voluminously every time he lost and his opponent raked the pot. Suddenly he dashed down his cards with a string of oaths.

"Blast you!" he roared. "Get out o' this before I blow you into cat's meat! You're a swindler! You're a card-cheating devil! Get out I say, or——"

"Gently!" admonished the unruffled Stregone. "These good friends of yours will bear witness that my play was fair and the game not of my own seeking. I have been fortunate enough to win, but as it would probably annoy you to see me pocket my gains, I will spare you the unpleasant sight."

He was standing close to the outer door, but back to it. As he spoke he took up one of the gold coins lying on the table before him and lightly tossed it against the solid wall, opposite him. It glittered in the lamplight, and rang as it struck the rough boarding, but it did not fall or rebound. It appeared to sink into the wall and leave no scar behind. One at a time he flung each piece of money until they had all disappeared. Then he stepped to the door and smiled back agreeably at the spell-bound gang around the table.

"Good-night, gentlemen," he said, and vanished into the darkness.

* * * * * * * * * *

The third and last time that I saw Stregone was in a half-civilized Arizona town. I had ridden in from the country and found preparations making for a hanging. The evidence, from what I could gather, seemed by no means to jusify an extreme penalty, but human lives were cheap in the wild borderland, and hangings a pleasant break in frontier monotony. The general circumstances of the case were as follows:

A stranger had come into town, on foot, and stopped for the night at the house of a "prominent citizen," who had a masterful wife and a remarkably fine horse.

In the morning the stranger and the horse were gone, and the prominent citizen had also vanished. The prominent citizen—whose name was Bandy White—not being on the best terms with his wife, he had been for the last few months accustomed to sleep in the shed with the horse. He had taken the stranger out to see the animal in the evening, and she overheard the stranger offer to buy it; her husband saying that he did not wish to part with it, they passed out of hearing. After a long time the stranger came in and went to the bed allotted him earlier, and Mrs. White, supposing that Bandy had retired to the stable for the night, fell asleep and did not awake until morning. When she awoke and found house and stable deserted, she raised the alarm. A posse was sent out to scour the country, and the next day the stranger was overtaken, leisurely crossing the Mexican border on Bandy White's horse. Brought back to justice, he had remained entirely calm and told a straightforward story. He said that White had sold him the horse, after some show of reluctance; after concluding the bargain and paying White in gold, he went into the house to bed, leaving White in the stable. Wishing to begin the journey before the heat of the day, he arose at dawn and rode away on his purchase, having first looked into the rough hay loft for his host and found him absent. The house being on the edge of the town, horse and rider had left without being observed.

On the other hand, Mrs. White vowed that her husband valued the horse as the apple of his eye and would not have parted with it on any terms—she had herself heard him refuse the stranger. If he had sold the horse, he would have at once put the money in her hands, as she had complete charge of financial affairs. Finally, White was gone utterly. With questionable haste the stranger was brought to trial for horse-theft and murder, and found guilty on both counts.

The execution was to occur at twelve o'clock, before the jail. As the hour approached, all the inhabitants of the town thronged about the rough gallows, the plat-

form of which was raised five or six feet, that all might have a fair view of the tragedy to be enacted there. Drawn by the hateful fascination that attends such scenes, I found myself in the midst of the crowd, a short distance from the scaffold. The new wood shone in the sunlight, and there was a pleasant smell of fresh chips in the air. At the appointed hour the jail gate opened and a group of officials appeared, surrounding the victim of frontier justice. As they drew near, I saw with a sudden cessation of heart beats that the prisoner was Stregone. He passed up the lane of spectators and mounted the steps of the gibbet with as calm an air as he might have worn in walking the boards of some great theatre where he was about to display his marvelous skill. As he stepped upon the platform, I saw that his hands were bound behind him —those flexible, clever, white hands. The rough cord had been drawn so brutally tight that it had cut the flesh of his wrists and the starting blood had stained his snowy cuffs. Otherwise his attire was as immaculate as ever.

The officials busied themselves in the final preparations, and the throng became hushed as the shadow of death fell chill upon it in the clear noonlight. Suddenly the doomed man stepped forward to the edge of the platform.

"My friends," he said, in that low, but wonderfully distinct voice—and every word reached to the confines of the crowd; "I understand that you are under the impression that I murdered Mr. White and stole his horse."

An undefined murmur responded.

"Will any of the gentlemen kindly watch the turn of the road?" he continued.

There was a moment of dead silence. Then a faint sound of galloping hoofs was heard, which grew louder and louder, until a man on a horse dashed around the bend and drew up on the outskirts of the crowd.

"What in thunder are ye doin' to that man?" yelled Bandy White's voice. "He ain't done nothin'! I sold

him the hoss and lit out between two days with the cash. But when I heard a set o' dam fools had jailed him for it I 'lowed I'd come back."

Every eye had fastened on the new arrival, and the sea of spectators had surged up and broken against him. For the instant the man under the hangman's loop had been forgotten. Now somebody raised the cry, "Loose the prisoner," and the crowd rolled back toward the scaffold. The platform was vacant.

There was a moment of astonished silence, then a babel of voices. Men ran hither and thither and searched every nook and corner about the gallows, but in vain. Stregone, bound and bleeding, surrounded by a thousand eyes, had vanished as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him. I have never seen or heard of him since, nor have I been able to form any conclusion concerning this man, who chose to bury his strange power in the obscurity of frontier life. Perhaps he has returned to civilization, and is now astonishing blasé metropolitan audiences. Perhaps his bones are scattered among the harsh rocks of the Sierras, or lie bleaching on the plains of Mexico. There the mystery stands, and he may solve it who can.

The worthy priest of Marineda forgot, as many others have done, that the life is a far louder and more eloquent preacher than the mouth. Doubtless scores of souls, whom he had never counted, shone as stars in the good man's heavenly diadem. His pathetic story was told by Madame Emilia Pardo Bazan, who is to the Spanish what George Eliot is to the English, and has been translated for ROMANCE by Mary Springer.

THE GOOD CANON OF MARINEDA.

THE Canon of Marineda resided in the same house with his sedate and elderly housekeeper, and he had a cat, and a thrush—one of those which are called *maloises* in Galicia, that whistle and trill in the most remarkable manner, and can imitate all the other songsters.

The Canon's residence was not only plain, but even poverty-stricken, and showed no signs of the scrupulous neatness usually the chief characteristic of those who wear a priestly garb. For you must know that the Canon's housekeeper, Dona Ramona Villardos Cabaleiros had formerly been a lady of rank, and therefore she was resolved to do as little housework as possible. She was fond of dwelling on the past, and of giving herself completely up to doleful recollections, ignoring the fact that there were such things as sweeping and cooking to be attended to. Such scenes as the following were therefore of frequent occurrence at the priest's dwelling: He would come in after saying mass, and while he hung his cloak and hat on a nail, his stomach would clamor loudly for nourishment, reminding him that it was time to take his cup of chocolate. Fortified by prospect of this comforting beverage, he would sit down to wait until that nutritious beverage should be brought to him. But alas! a quarter of an hour would elapse, and then another, without any signs of his breakfast. Finally, he would timidly and gently call to the housekeeper:

"Dona Ramona—Dona Ramona!"

At the end of ten minutes a doleful voice would reply:

"What do you want?"

"Ah, where is my cup of chocolate?"

"Alas!" ejaculated the suffering duenna, "I cannot attend to anything to-day. Do you know what day it is?"

"Yes, Thursday, February 6th, Saint Dorothy and Saint Revocata."

"Just so—the anniversary of the day on which I felt so happy, and was suddenly shocked by receiving the news that my brother-in-law, the major, had died of yellow fever in Cuba. Alas, may the Lord grant me patience to bear up under my affliction!"

The worthy, good-natured Canon never dared to ask the dame whether the fact that her brother-in-law had died of yellow fever was any reason why her master should be starved to death. He would meekly open the cupboard in the kitchen, take out a piece of chocolate from its greasy wrapper, and nibble at it a while, washing it down with a glass of water. Then he would endeavor to comfort Dona Ramona, who was usually sniffling on the sofa, with her face tied up in a handkerchief.

"Dona Ramona, you should be resigned to your lot. You ought not to rebel against God. Come now, if you keep on crying, we shall no longer be friends," and so on, sometimes for hours at a time.

Occasionally the Canon, with those very hands which shortly before had raised the consecrated host, would be compelled to perform the humble office of washing potatoes or preparing vegetables for his broth.

However, these things did not worry him as much as his lack of oratorical gifts, and his failure to console the troubled housekeeper's spirit. For if the worthy Canon ever had any longing, it was to be eloquent. He would have given his right hand in order to be able to compose a striking sermon. Every time that a silver-tongued Jesuit would ascend into the pulpit, and deliver a fiery address, railing against the irreligious

theories of Draper and of Strauss—who were totally unknown in Marineda; or some young priest, cut after the pattern of Castelar, would discourse about "Judaical hard-heartedness" and the "epoch of the Reconquest," or "the light of civilization spread from Golgotha," the worthy Canon was not consumed with envy, for he was incapable of such a weakness, but he would become painfully conscious of his own deficiencies, and would lament his own incapacity for preaching. If we were to gather together his disjointed reflections, they might read as follows: "O, my Lord, it is evident that I am good for nothing. I am not worth my salt. I am as dumb as a fish. It was folly on my part to desire, as I have done, that I might be sent to preach the Gospel to the heathen in the wilds of Africa, where a rich harvest of souls might be gleaned. A nice apostle I should make, with my faltering tongue, my commonplace remarks, my croaking voice, and my ordinary appearance! O Lord, why hast thou withheld the power of speech from me?"

At the confessional the Canon encountered the same difficulty. He never was able to make use of those bitter-sweet admonitions which soothe the conscientious scruples of the devotees, nor fulminate those scathing apostrophes which touch the hardened sinner's heart.

Therefore Angelita Ramos, the president of "the Daughters of Mary," the Marchioness of Venailes, the founder of the Roperito, the wife of Marshal Celis—in fact, the *crême de la crême* of the devout church-goers of Marineda—all agreed that the Canon was a prosy preacher, while Father Incienso was very popular; and they liked the way in which he delivered rhetorical phrases, interwoven with mystical observations, from behind the grating of the confessional.

On the other hand, the common people sang the praises of the Canon, and lauded him to the sky. Sailors, artisans, and cigar-makers, when they saw him shuffle by with a kindly smile on his benevolent face, would say to one another in a low tone: "He is a saint."

Many anecdotes were told of the good man at the cigar-factory, where all the news is known and commented upon. They would tell how he had sold his silver buckles to pay the rent of some poor people, who were about to be ejected from their dwelling, and if a beggar asked for alms, and he had no money to give him, he would strip off for the sufferer his own muffler, his handkerchief or even his rosary. He suffered all sorts of privations in order to alleviate the wants of other people.

One night the Canon retired at the time the chickens go to roost, for he had a severe cold. It was a dreary evening, and the rain was falling in torrents, while the wind shook the houses, and whistled through the streets.

For that very reason, the Canon enjoyed lying in his warm bed, snugly tucked up, and experiencing that delightful drowsiness which precedes sleep. His aching bones, tortured by rheumatism, were feeling a grateful warmth, and he could breathe quite freely. It was a moment of sybaritical enjoyment, such as prolongs the feeble existence of old men. The Canon had just murmured the last evening prayer, when the door-bell was violently rung, and a hot discussion was heard going on in the ante-chamber. It grew more and more excited until Dona Ramona, holding a candlestick on high, burst into the room to inform the Canon that a shabbily-dressed woman, who looked like a beggar, insisted on seeing him at once. Like a soldier at the sound of the *reveille*, the Canon sprang from his bed, and scarcely waiting to clothe himself went out into the ante-chamber to meet the stranger. The water was streaming from her garments, for the rain had wet her to the skin.

"Oh, most holy man!" she exclaimed, endeavoring to kiss the old priest's hand. "My brother is at his last gasp, and will not confess. He is dying, like a dog, señor, and pardon me for speaking so. Come, good sir, try to move his hardened heart, so that his sinful soul may not thus be launched into another world unpardoned."

"Who is your brother, my good woman?"

"The notary Roca."

The Canon gazed in astonishment at the woman's shabby garments, and as she read his thoughts, she stammered:

"I am a cigar-maker, and as my eye-sight is poor, I can earn only a scanty livelihood. My brother is rolling in wealth, but he never gives me a single cent. He has a wicked housekeeper who makes way with all he has, and here am I, with my four little ones, obliged to earn my bread by the sweat of my brow. But do not think that I have come on account of his money, or because I wish him to leave it to me. I was born poor, and shall die poor, and I should not care if it were not for my children. But I do not want my brother to lose his soul. I do not want him to be condemned forever."

"See here, my poor woman," said the Canon, already touched by her vehemence, "I am not capable of convincing any one nor moving his heart. Go to Father Incienso."

"Ah, Father, that priest may be very good, but there is no other man so saintly as you are, in Marineda. We, the cigar-makers, would put you ahead of the Pope himself. If you do not wish to come, say so, but don't tell me to look for any one else, for if you do not perform this miracle, not even Christ himself could do so."

Oh, human weakness! As she spoke, the Canon felt an inward satisfaction, and said:

"Dona Ramona, give me my umbrella."

"Your umbrella!" snapped the housekeeper. "Don't you know that it is in tatters, like the banner of the *Literarios*, and that I was obliged to send it to be recovered?"

The Canon hesitated for a moment and then said timidly:

"Well, bring me my cloak and my old hat, and my muffler."

He left the house with the woman, and the rain beat down on their defenseless heads, while the heavy gusts of wind almost took their breath away, as it drove

them along. The rain penetrated his garments, and chilled the poor Canon to the very marrow.

"Oh," he thought, "if I only had a sip of wine or brandy! If I could only warm myself by the blaze of a good fire!"

After a long tramp they reached the house, and the cigar-maker boldly knocked on the door, and as it was not opened at once, she knocked still louder. A formidable-looking woman, with mustaches, bulging eyes, and fleshy, heavy form, made her appearance at the door and overwhelmed them with invectives. She endeavored to close the door again, but the cigar-maker had thrust herself into the opening like a wedge, and, foaming with rage, cried:

"Get out of the way! get out of the way! I have brought this holy man, so that my brother shall not die like a dog! Get out of the way, you horrid thing!"

She pointed to the Canon behind her, shivering with cold.

It was singular, but the fleshy woman knew him at once, and as she recognized him, her bearing changed; her eyes no longer flashed fire, and she meekly said:

"Come in, good father, come in. Pardon me, for I did not see you. You relieved the distress of my poor mother, don't you recollect? In heaven is still recorded the money you gave her to enable her to buy a vegetable-stall in the market-place to earn her living. Oh, no, I shall never shut my door in your face. Come in, sir, and make yourself at home, but please remember that I have been doing the work in this house for the past three years, and it is only just that, when Señor Roca dies, he should leave me something. Come in."

The Canon drew himself up. The spark of life within him was rekindled under the glow of that enthusiastic reception, of that unexpected gratitude—the result of a good action, which he had long ago forgotten. A mysterious light illumined his spirit, and a sudden thought, terrible as well as comforting, thrilled him to the very centre of his heart. This thought changed his deadly coldness into ardor—a species of

apostolic fervor. He entered the sick man's room with a firm step.

The notary was in one of those painful crises which are the forerunners of death. His chest rose and fell as he gasped for breath, and his painful respiration could be heard from the passage-way. In spite of his suffering, he noticed the entrance of the Canon, and wildly waving his arms, and uttering a hoarse cry, he showed his displeasure.

Notwithstanding this, after the housekeeper had shaken up his pillows, she discreetly withdrew, leaving him alone with the Canon—the healer of souls.

The Canon stopped on the threshold, as though hesitating or waiting for the inspiration of the moment to move him. His limbs were cramped with cold, but there was an ardent glow within him now, which filled his soul with holy fire. He no longer thought of warming his stomach by a sip of wine, nor of drawing near to the grateful blaze of the fire-place, nor of going back to his comfortable bed.

He went up to the sick man, and knelt beside him.

The notary fixed upon his visitor his dim eyes, already glazed with the film of death.

"What, what are you doing there?" he painfully ejaculated.

"I am praying," replied the priest, "that you may confess and may repent of your sins, and save your soul."

"And you—by heaven! What business is it of yours, I would like to know. Here, Pepa."

"Don't call Pepa, for she knows that I shall not harm you; I am interested in saving your soul," replied the Canon, drawing himself up, and raising his voice, while he seemed to increase in stature and spirit, as he found within himself a strength of will and flow of ideas which were fully equal to any of Father Incienso's:

"I am interested, because you may die to-day, but I am sure—do you understand me? that I myself shall not live eight days longer. I had a severe cold, and was ill in bed, but I have come to hear you confess. I

am drenched to the skin, and I know I have caught my death, but I do not want to present myself before the Almighty with empty hands, and I have made up my mind to save your soul in order not to lose my own. I have not been of much use to God during my life-time—do you understand—of none at all. And now He calls me to himself, and do you want me to say to him, 'I am so incompetent, I could not even touch the notary Roca's heart?' But now I possess a power of speech, such as I never had before, and do you want to prevent me from deriving any benefit from it? No, sir, you must listen to me. I shall not go away from here without absolving you from your sins, even if I am torn in pieces. Kill me, if you wish to, but listen to me and heed what I say."

. . . . . .

The last episode in the history of the Canon occurred at the portals of heaven. The notary's soul and his own reached it at the same moment, for the notary was converted by the apostle's tardy eloquence. The notary, both shame-faced and overjoyed—for, to tell the truth, he had never dreamed he should be able to go to heaven—the notary stepped back politely to make way for the Canon's soul. But the Canon said smilingly to the repentant sinner, as he drew back: "No, you must enter first."

If the petition did not happen to occur in the Lord's prayer, it is doubtful whether many people would remember to beg not to be led into temptation; yet thousands who consider themselves virtuous might show a weaker front than poor "Marcaille," in this thrilling story by Paul Célières, if a temptation like his should present itself. The translation has been made for ROMANCE by Elizabeth Elliot.

A REGISTERED LETTER.

"A WILD night, Marcaille," said the postmistress to the letter-carrier, who had just come in.

"Wild, indeed, Madame Lefevre," replied Marcaille, "'twill be bad going to the midnight mass."

As he spoke, he shook out his old cloak all white with snow, while the postmistress sorted the letters.

"There! that is done," she said. "But warm yourself before you start out."

Marcaille threw down his leather bag, black and shiny in spots, and came close to the roaring stove.

He was a little, wiry, tough-looking man. His face, browned by sun and wind, was as wrinkled as an old apple. His nose was a thought too red, his eyes sparkled, his mouth was smiling; it was a good face that called forth friendly words and cordial handgrasps. His moustache had a military ferocity, and on his blue blouse with its red collar a worn scrap of yellow and green ribbon told all his past: drawn in the draft, seven years of service, re-enlisted, petty officer, wounded at Alma, wounded at Solferino, honorably discharged. Then Marcaille had been given the place of postman on the Champagnole route—four hundred francs a year, pension of one hundred francs, making a total income of five hundred francs.

And for ten years, for five hundred francs, Marcaille made twice a day, morning and evening, his round: Cize, Pillemoine, le Vaudioux, Châtelneuf, Maisonneuve and Siane, a circuit of seven leagues in all

weathers. With his five hundred francs he took care of a wife and four children; the eldest was six.

But Marcaille had acquired the bad habit of a little "taste," as he called it. In every village he had old acquaintances, almost friends. In every house he found, in exchange for the letter he brought, a glass of wine that seemed to him to put strength into his heart and his legs. His nose grew a little redder; it even happened once that he lost a letter, not a very important one fortunately, but it might have taught him a lesson.

"Here they are, Marcaille," said Madame Lefevre, "two letters for Cize, one for Pillemoine, one for le Vaudioux—nothing for Châtelneuf."

"That's good," said Marcaille. That "nothing for Châtelneuf" spared him a league and a half of rough walking.

"For Siane," went on Madame Lefevre, "pay attention! A registered letter!"

"It is not the first."

"No, but——" and Madame held up a great envelope, bristling with stamps and notices, beside which spread out, like blots of blood, five enormous red seals.

"That's worth caring for," said Marcaille, laughing. "Whose is it?"

"For monsieur, the Mayor."

"Well, it will go through his hands, never fear.'

"Not more than through yours," said madame.

"No, but more of it will stick to his."

With this philosophic reflection, Marcaille dropped the letter into his leather bag, which he buckled carefully. He put on his cloak and opened the door.

"And above all," cried madame after him, "don't begin Christmas Eve too soon!"

"Don't be afraid!" and Marcaille was in a moment out of sight.

The cold pinched sharply; the piercing wind blew up little whirlpools of fine, dry snow. Marcaille jogged along briskly, muttering:

"Not much Christmas! A mouthful for six and a

glass of water! But, after all, there are those who have nothing."

"Hullo, Marcaille!" cried suddenly a rough voice.

Marcaille turned.

"A glass of wine?" said the voice.

"Hum," grumbled Marcaille to himself, "attention, registered letter!" Then aloud, "I'm late now; no, thank you!"

The window of the "Pineapple" public-house, which had opened, closed again, and Marcaille, proud of the victory over himself, went whistling out of the village.

It was four o'clock, but the night comes early in December. Lights already began to shine out from the scattered houses. The night darkened over the forest of Siane on the left. In the branches the wind whistled, with its plaintive or menacing modulations, and its vague accompaniment to Marcaille's whistling.

"This rascally sack," he grumbled. "How heavy it is to-night! I would have done better after all to stop at the Pineapple. One glass of white wine is no killing matter. Yes, but then when a fellow takes one, he takes two, and then away he goes! Brrrr! I was warmer than this in Africa. I can't feel my hands at all."

Marcaille stopped, put down his bag, and beat vigorously upon his sides with both arms. He drew in a long breath of icy air, and exhaled it with a breath that was much like a sigh, and trudged on again. Five minutes after, he was at Cize and ringing at the door of the fine big house of the ironmaster.

"It is Father Marcaille."

"Hullo, Marcaille!"

"Have you got some letters?"

The children swarmed round him. He came up the outside steps, and the dancing youngsters pulled and pushed him to the door of the drawing-room. There, even as he let himself be pushed along, Marcaille thought:

"Attention, old fellow, registered letter. No Christmas Eve this early."

Around him were happy voices and bursts of laughter. In the middle of the room the ironmaster and his wife were tying to the branches of a towering Christmas tree mysterious parcels which would soon be distributed to the impatient little circle. A pleasant task truly, in this warm and fragrant atmosphere, before a crackling fire, while outside the wind rattled the windows and whistled down the chimneys.

"A glass of wine, Marcaille?" said the friendly mistress of the house.

Marcaille gulped down a great sigh. Then he said, "Thank you, madame, not this evening!"

This was indeed courage! To refuse a glass of wine in such weather, when he had still three good leagues up the mountain before him. But how light he felt when he proudly resumed his journey. He felt light, but his bag seemed heavier than ever. Never had it weighed so upon his shoulders.

"This rascally bag!" he grumbled. "It is that letter. What can be in it? If it should be bank-notes, judged by the weight, there should be a fortune. This rascally bag!"

Marcaille stopped. Decidedly this wouldn't do. The strap cut into his shoulder, he took off his cloak, changed it to the other shoulder and started off again. But things seemed no better. The road always seemed less long when he had had a glass of wine, at the Pine-apple or elsewhere.

The cold, which he seldom noticed, made him shiver and groan. And then the wind whistling through the trees sounded so doleful in the winter night.

And still grumbling, "The rascally bag!" and whistling at intervals, he went down toward Pillemoine. Below him stretched the valley, lost in the shadow, dotted here and there with lights, for the night was almost black. But he knew every village and every house, and in the blackness he recognized far away the house of the ironmaster, with every window lighted up. The joyous scene passed again before his eyes—the flaming fire, the cakes on beautiful plates, the

Christmas tree, and everywhere the children, dancing around their smiling parents.

"Yes, yes," murmured Marcaille. "There are some lucky people in the world. They have money, all they want, and with money one can do anything. Just get a little and it's like a snowball, it rolls up bigger and bigger. Some have all, and others have none. There they are by the fire, and I, out here in the snow. And what they spend for their amusement to-night I couldn't earn in a year. And yet they say God is just!"

Why did these ideas come to him? He had never envied any one. Why then did he stop and gaze fiercely at the lights shining below him.

He shook himself together.

"Forward, Marcaille," he cried, "forward march.

But the wind whistled and moaned in the pine-trees like a crying baby, and Marcaille, passing in thought from the ironmaster's house to his own, saw his four little ones gathered round their mother, by a scanty fire of fagots; he saw them searching in the cupboard for a forgotten bread-crust; he saw them going to sleep, all four on the same little wretched straw mattress. Oh! poverty, poverty, it is hard! And to think that right here, in his bag——

"Registered letter!" he thought. "If it should be bank-bills! Imbecile! It is for the Mayor. It comes from the prefecture. It is probably only papers, and they register it and put on those big seals for a grand effect. Yes, but—if it should be bank-bills!"

He stopped short, perspiring, his forehead damp, and said suddenly aloud, breaking the sombre silence, "Well, and what then? If it should be bank-bills, what is that to you?"

His face flushed red at the thought that had crossed his mind. "I haven't drunk anything either," he murmured, with a shudder.

He entered Pillemoine. At the door of a peasant's house he knocked. A window opened.

"Oh! It is Marcaille. Come in!"

He went in.

"What ails you?" asked the man. "You're pale. Have a glass of wine."

"No, no, thanks," said Marcaille in a dull voice. In rebuckling his bag he had felt the registered letter brush the tips of his fingers.

The man had taken a glass, he held the bottle, all ready to pour.

"No," repeated Marcaille. And without another word he hurried out. The ends of his fingers seemed to burn at the remembrance of the red seals. Bank-bills, as many as there were there, how many things one could buy with them! A good house, like the ironmaster's, warm clothes, flannels! And what dinners! Rich—with what was in that letter one would be rich!

He began to whistle, but his breath failed him, and he felt his legs tremble beneath him. Without intending to, without wishing to, he had unbuckled the bag, he had taken out the letter, and in the half-light reflected from the snow he saw, like drops of blood, the five great red seals.

"Am I going mad?" he cried. "I have drunk nothing."

He stood up at his full height, staring at the letter.

"I am an honest man," he said.

Then he put the letter back in his bag with an angry gesture, and marched on, with a measured step, striking with his heel, and counting as he used to do in the regiment when the march was long, "One, two; one, two."

The regiment! Ah! how far away it was, that time! How poor they seemed to him now, the brave joys of the soldier, which had made his heart beat for fourteen years! What a fool he was to enlist! Fighting in the field, hard fare in the camp, suffering in the ambulance. His medal! Great things indeed. A bit of ribbon on his blouse. How much better he would have done to start out, like his brother, to seek his fortune!

"It was by this road he went," thought Marcaille, as he started across the great road to Geneva, whose white

length to his right stretched along by the forest of Siane, "by this road."

That long white road, he had only to travel along it—and he stopped.

"The frontier," he thought, "is quite near. Ten leagues, what is that? Taking time to go for the wife and babies, one could be there to-morrow morning. And once there, one is safe. The mayor is not expecting this letter. If people missed us to-morrow, they would think something had happened to me in the night, that I had fallen into a hole or something, and that my wife was looking for me. Suspect me? Oh! no. Marcaille is an honest man, an honest man!"

The sweat stood on his brow. Panting, with his eyes fixed on that white line which lost itself in the night, he repeated in a low voice, "An honest man."

His hand slipped under his cloak, unbuckled the leather bag, and trembled as it touched the five red seals.

"Yes, but if I were wrong," he murmured, "if there were only papers in it."

Quickly he took the letter and felt it carefully to find out its secret. But the envelope was thick and hard, the paper crackled under his fingers with a little dry noise that sounded formidably loud, while the night wind whistled in his ears,

"Thief! thief! thief!"

"Who said Marcaille was a thief?" he cried, with a fierce gesture. Then, seeing that he was alone, he came to himself and fell at the side of the road, crouching, his head in his hands, and murmuring:

"This is frightful! But I have drunk nothing."

Slowly he re-opened the leather bag and slipped in the letter; slowly he rose; slowly still he crossed the road. It seemed as if an implacable, invisible hand held him fast to this spot from which he would have hurried away. The road to Siane was straight before him; a half-hour more and he should have finished his round, the letter would be given to the Mayor, and he would be safe.

"Come, Marcaille," he cried, "on with you!"

But no, he remained there motionless on that cursed road that led to the frontier. And for the third time, carried away by irresistible temptation, he drew from the bag the registered letter, saying:

"I must know what is in it."

Very carefully with the point of his knife he raised one corner of the envelope enough to slip in his finger, and draw up one of the papers it contained. The task was a delicate one, he must go slowly, very slowly, in order to tear nothing. If it were only papers!

The night-wind whistled in his ears, "Thief! thief! thief!"

But he did not hear it. He thought only of one thing, to know what was in that letter. He had only one fear, of not succeeding or of deceiving himself. At last he got hold of a corner of the enclosure. He took a match, lit it, and by its light saw—a bank-note.

It was really bank-notes. His head swam. The envelope was heavy, the sum must be enormous. He was about to tear it open to count it, but again he stopped.

"Let me see, let me see," he thought, "I need not hurry. I must plan out everything. A trifle spoils all sometimes. I will go home. I will tell Genevieve that we are going away. She will begin to ask questions. She will want to know everything. Bah! I will make up a story. I will tell her—but she will not believe me. Would she consent? Yes, yes, she must. To be rich, isn't that before everything? Are there not hundreds and thousands whom all the world bows down to, who begun just this way? Not to be caught, that is all. We will put the babies into the little cart. By daybreak we will be at the frontier. The gendarmes? Well, don't the gendarmes know me? don't they know that Marcaille is an honest man?"

He laughed convulsively as he said this, and again he heard the wind whistling in his ears,

"Thief! thief! thief!"

He folded the registered letter and, instead of replac-

ing it in the leather bag, slipped it into his pocket. It was his. Then with a strident voice he cried out, "Forward, Marcaille, forward! you are a rich man."

But he had hardly taken a step forward when his voice died in his throat. Behind him on the road he had just left he heard voices, clear and piercing. It was like the indistinct murmur of a crowd.

Marcaille shivered. Was he already suspected? Had his trouble betrayed him? Was he pursued? He listened attentively. The voices drew nearer, and then he heard distinctly.

"Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!" called the women's voices.

"Merry Christmas!" replied the voices of the children.

The bells of the church at Vaudioux commenced to strike, slowly at first, then louder, calling to the midnight mass the good people of Châtelneuf, of Maisonneuve, and of Pillemoine.

Marcaille, trembling with convulsive shivers, mechanically repeated, "Christmas! Christmas!"

Every stroke of the bell sounded in his ears and in his heart, and seemed to buzz in his head.

"Christmas! Christmas!" he repeated.

Then suddenly he burst into tears and buried his face in his hands. "Oh! misery," he cried, "I had drunk nothing."

Reason came back to him, and with it a realization of his incompleted crime. And it was no longer only the night-wind, it was the voices of his wife and children, it was the pealing of that midnight bell, which accused him.

"Christmas!" cried the voices.

"Thief!" replied the sombre depths of the forest.

Terrified, he tried to leave the voices behind him, running faster and still faster. And then a dizziness seized him. He knew not why he ran. Some one was after him, that was all. But who? His conscience or the gendarmes, he knew not which. Where was the danger? Everywhere.

In the shadows, to the right and to the left, he saw everywhere vague forms which followed him; the branches bent low over his head like arms to stop him. Terror at all these strange visions strangled him. Wildly he ran along, the blood throbbing in his temples; then suddenly fell heavily, in a dead faint.

* * * * * * * * * *

When he came to himself, he was lying before the fire in his own room. Genevieve and the children were kneeling and crying around him. He did not see them. The people of Siane, who, coming from the midnight mass, had found him, were there also. He did not see them.

"The letter? the letter?" he cried. With one bound he sprung to the leather bag which had been thrown on the ground in the corner. It was empty.

"The letter? the letter?" he cried. Then he remembered, and drawing from his pocket the big envelope with the five red seals—still unbroken—he rushed out like a madman straight to the mayor's.

"A registered letter!" he cried.

"Oh! indeed," said the mayor laughing. "What a state you are in! One would think you had come to ask pardon for a condemned criminal."

"Well they might," said Marcaille. "But take the letter first. It is a little soiled—I fell down—I——"

His lie strangled him.

"A drop too much," said the mayor.

"No, I had drunk nothing," said Marcaille quietly, "and it is just for that reason that I have brought you my resignation."

The mayor had broken the seals, examined the bank-notes and glanced over the accompanying letter.

"Your resignation?" said he. "Well, I should think so—I can understand that."

"Ah! you know——"

"I know you are rich, my good fellow."

Was this a joke? or had the mayor in some way looked into his conscience and read the whole story? Marcaille became pale at the thought.

"Rich?" he murmured.

"Why, yes, there is no doubt about that. This letter tells me of the death of your brother, Jean Marcaille, who died at Toulouse, where he resided, on the eighth of this present month. According to his last wishes all he possessed has been disposed of by Michael Dulac, notary of that city, who sends to me the amount of twenty-four thousand francs, which I am instructed to turn over to you."

"Ah!" said Marcaille, overwhelmed, as he took mechanically into his hand the big envelope that the mayor offered him, "Jean is dead, and I am rich?"

Then after a moment of silence, "It makes no difference," he murmured, so low that the mayor could not hear him, "I should have been a thief, just the same."

Then turning he added, loud enough this time,

"But I am still an honest man, thank God!"

"No one ever doubted it, Marcaille," said the mayor. "But take my advice and be more careful. A glass of wine too much goes to your head, and you might fare worse another time."

"You are right, sir," said Marcaille, and he went off whistling, with his head in the air.

Was Marcaille an honest man? I should say, yes!

South America and Mexico have made no insignificant addition to the body of Spanish literature. Here is a well-executed sketch by Raul A. Tebareo, an Argentine writer. It gives a good idea of life in the Argentine republic, and has been translated for ROMANCE by Amalia Solano.

MY FIRST DUEL.

"WHO is that pretty girl who bowed to you?"

"That is Carmen Ellauri de Garcia." As he spoke, an amused smile passed over the face of Carlos Gonzales.

This short conversation was held between two young men, one afternoon, as they stood under the arcade of *La Confiteria del Aguela*, in Calle Florida,[1] in the city of Buenos Ayres.

Both young men belonged to the *Jeunesse dorée* of our city, and, having very little to do, were amusing themselves by watching all the pretty Porteñas[2] pass along *la* Calle Florida.

"Why do you smile?" asked Dr. Federico Pinares, who had been the first one to speak.

"You would also smile," answered Carlos, "if you had made a fool of yourself about a woman, sent her enough flowers every day to adorn a church, stayed awake all night to write a few lines of poetry to send her; danced with her so often that every one said, 'Oh, yes, they are going to be married'; fought a duel for her; and then had that very same woman pass you in the street with a cool bow and completely ignore you otherwise."

"You fought a duel, why?" asked Federico.

"It is a long tale, and it happened while you were in Paris studying medicine. I presume you never heard of it?"

[1] The fashionable thoroughfare of the city of Buenos Ayres.

[2] Porteño is the name given to the people of the city of Buenos Ayres.

"If I did, I do not remember now," answered Dr. Pinares. "Now, Carlos, tell me all about it."

"It is nearly half-past six. Let us go to the *Café de Paris* and have dinner. There, after dinner, I will tell you the story."

The two young men proceeded toward Piedad Street, and entered the brilliantly-lighted restaurant of the *Café de Paris.*

After a costly dinner, for in Buenos Ayres everything is costly, they asked for their coffee and *chartreuse*, and Carlos Gonzales commenced his story:

"Three years ago, I would have gone fighting windmills, a flock of sheep, or worse, like Don Quixote, had any one told me that Carmencita Ellauri was not the prettiest girl in Buenos Ayres; but, for that matter, I could name you half a dozen men who thought the same thing, and among them was Ernesto Frias.

"You perhaps remember what great friends Ernesto and I once were; but when we both began courting Carmen, all our friendship flew away upon the wings of the wind.

"Carmen certainly gave me reason to think that she was serious, and I suppose she did the same to Frias, for many people believed she would marry him.

"One night—it was really two o'clock in the morning—we were playing cards at the Club del Progreso, when, between two games, one of the men remarked, 'By the way, Frias, when does the wedding come off?'

"'What wedding?'" he asked.

"'Why, your marriage with Carmencita Ellauri.'

"'Now don't be foolish,' Frias calmly said; 'go on, give me my cards.'

"All the men laughed, and one of them said,

"'Silence gives consent, and so we may believe that you are engaged to her. Well, let me congratulate you,' and so saying, he slapped Frias on the shoulder.

"Frias only smiled complacently, and they continued their raillery until I could stand it no longer, inasmuch as I had been on fire during all the conversation; so I lifted my head and said as calmly as I could,

"'Gentlemen, it is in very bad taste to thus use the name of a lady, and any one who does it or allows it, without resenting the insult, is a coward.'

"Ernesto turned pale, and, pushing back his chair, rose to his feet.

"'Am I to understand that this insult is directed to me?' he asked.

"'I care not what you understand,' I answered, 'I expressed my sentiment.'

"'And do you know what my sentiment is?' he asked. 'I think that you are the greatest coward for daring to take that lady's name as a basis for a scandal and a quarrel.'

"Blind with fury, I advanced toward Frias, and with my open palm smote his cheek lightly. Ernesto clenched his fists, and made a move toward me, but some of his friends held him back, as others were holding me. Ernesto took out his card-case, and with trembling fingers opened it, got a card, threw it on the table and said, 'I hope that Señor Gonzales will not be coward enough to refuse to meet me. To-morrow, or rather to-day, at ten o'clock in the morning, I will send him my seconds.'

"'Mine will be ready to meet those of Señor Frias,' I ceremoniously answered.

"'Well,' I thought on leaving the club, 'here I am, engaged in a duel, but I don't care, I was defending her; besides, I shall have the choice of weapons, and certainly I shall choose swords.'

"I was an expert with the sword, as I had taken lessons from the celebrated Italian professor, Signor Spadachini, so my mind was perfectly at peace.

"When I reached home, I wrote two or three letters to friends of mine, who I knew would be my seconds; ordered my servant to take the letters to their respective addresses as soon as it became light; and then went to bed and slept calmly until eight o'clock.

"At about nine, I saw my seconds, and gave them my instructions. I was rather excited until I saw them again, nearly four hours later, when they acquainted

me with the result of their interview. We were to go to Montevideo to fight, for, as you know, duelling is forbidden on Argentine soil. The meeting would take place next day at two o'clock P.M. in the *Quinta*[1] of a friend of one of my seconds.

"In the meantime, the story of our quarrel had become public property, and the afternoon papers were full of it. I managed to elude all the reporters, and, safe from annoyance, took the steamer, bound for Montevideo, that evening. Next morning I landed in that city, very much the worse for a terrible storm that we had encountered in crossing over.

"I slept nearly all the morning, and at noon they called me to dinner. I could not eat a mouthful of anything, and by a quarter past one I stepped into the carriage that was to convey me to the meeting-place.

"We arrived there all too soon, it seemed to me, but no, Ernesto Frias, with his seconds, was there, and also a physician, ready for whatever emergency might arise.

"When all the usual formalities had been observed, we began our duel.

"Ernesto is a good swordsman, and so am I. We both went through the forms of attack and defense with such skill that it would have made glad the heart of our teachers had they seen us.

"One mortal hour elapsed, and not a scratch had either of us received. The thing was getting to be, to say the least, slightly monotonous, and so I began to charge more impetuously. Frias defended himself in a masterly manner. I began to lose my head. Presently I felt something cold and sharp pierce my upper arm. In drawing out the sword, blood followed it. Our seconds immediately stepped between us, and the doctor tore off the sleeve of my left arm, and disclosed to my eyes a small wound between the elbow and the shoulder.

"Frias declared that he was satisfied, and so was I, so our seconds solemnly said, 'The honor of both gentlemen is vindicated.' Our courage was now unquestion-

[1] Country house.

able. We shook hands, and so ended my first and only *affaire d'honneur.*"

"Yes, but what of the rest, the lady, etc.," asked Dr. Pinares.

"Oh, the papers were full of it, some praising, a few censuring; but on the whole, it was very flattering—to Frias, and a little, to myself. As for her, well," laughing, "that is what amused me. She would not see either of us after the affair, and a month later she married Don Pablo Garcia, a very wealthy merchant. It seems that she was engaged to him during all the time when she was making fools of Frias and me."

Agnes Barnum Hoyt, who has described this incident for ROMANCE, writes: "This simple story has done more to 'elevate the stage' and make acting seem moral in the minds of the country people in 'Uncle Bije's' neighborhood than could any amount of mere assertion."

A PLEA FOR MELODRAMA.

"UNCLE BIJE" MAXWELL has spent the fifty-five years of his life in Walton Center. He has kept the village store for years, and is "Uncle Bije" to the country people for miles around.

Occasional trips to the city, forty miles distant, to look after goods, have been the milestones of his life. The tallest stone marks the last trip, five years ago, when he staid all night and "Jim Barton," "what used to live to the Center and lives to the city now," took him to the theatre.

"Uncle Bije" never grows tired of telling this incident to the willing listeners who congregate at the store when farm-work is done; and the "theatre story," though well known up to a certain point, can rouse more genuine interest among the regular attendants of the Center church, who look upon a theatre as the epitome of "the World, the Flesh and the Devil," than can any other topic, except the proposed railroad through the town.

The play was a melodrama at "popular prices,"— a scheming villain, beautiful girl, two lovers, colored lights, funny man, with all objectionable people killed at the right time. This is graphically described by "Uncle Bije." It is not until the *denouement* in the last act, when the hero, Count de ——, having killed the villain and secured the hidden treasure, returns to share the fortune with his mother, only to find her dead, that "Uncle Bije" really warms to the subject. It is best described in his own language.

"When the curtain riz, there was the slickest grave-

yard you ever see,—green grass and little daisies a-growing all over the mounds, and grave stuns a settin' up there as large as life. After a while, there was a noise, an' in rides the Count on a horse,—a real live one. He throwed the lines to a man, his hired man, and then he walks real slow, funeral like, to find his mother's grave, for she was dead and he had just heerd of it down to the village. Purty soon he finds it and, awful sad-like, he says, 'my mother's grave.' Then the lights goes down, most out, an' the music jest so fine you can't hardly hear it, an' he sings some piece about her bein' gone and this was her grave. Oh! it was jest beautiful! And then he stops and talks to her an' tells her how bad he feels 'cause she's gone, for you know she was his mother, and then he sings some more, with his voice all a-tremblin'. And everybody wipes their eyes, and be gosh, I wiped mine. Purty soon he feels so bad he can't hardly stand it. The music most cries too, an' he says, 'Mother,' kinder loud and awful like, an' then lays right down and wallers on her grave. By Lordy Heavens! there wa'n't a dry eye in that house. There wa'n't. It was jest grand. You see it was his *mother's* grave, and when he laid down and wallered, why everybody jest——"

This is as far as the story has ever been told. At this point "Uncle Bije's" emotions get the better of him, and he leaves abruptly, ostensibly to pump water, but in reality to dry his eyes.

No one has ever yet had the courage to ask him what became of the Count.